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Calvinist Contact

An independent Christian weekly

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Christian family brings home two Romanian orphans

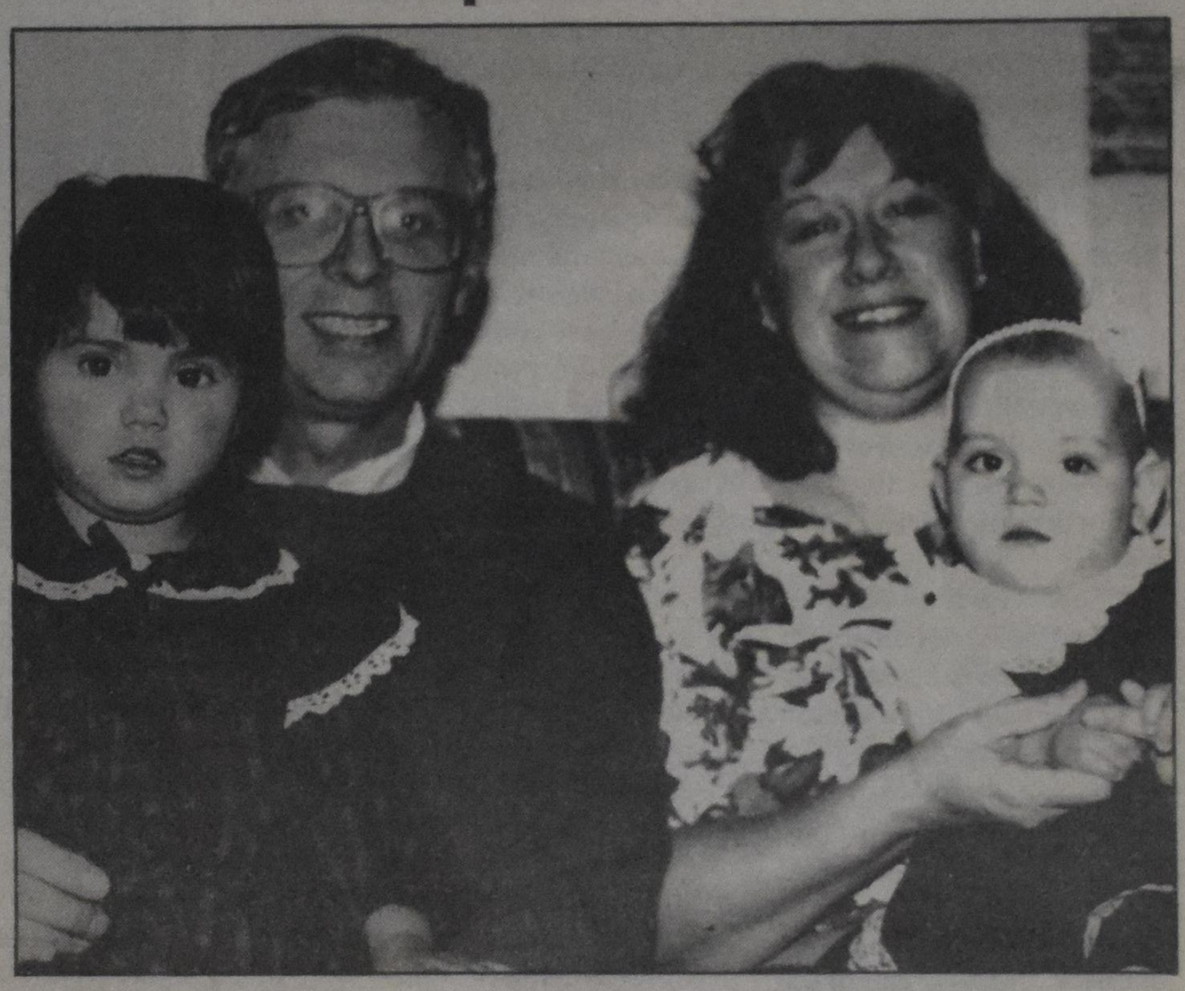


Photo: Alison de Groot

The now complete Brice family portrait includes Alena Danielle (l), Larry, Karen and Erika Ashley Luminita.

Alison de Groot

JARVIS, Ont. — They are the picture perfect family: Mom, Dad, two beautiful daughters and a yellow Labrador. For parents Larry and Karen Brice, the portrait is the result of what they call "a five-year pregnancy and a one-month delivery."

The Brice's daughters, Alena Danielle, 3, and Erika Ashley Luminita, 1, have only been part of the Brice's family portrait for just over two months. Both girls were Romanian orphans until the "Lord's leading" brought them into the lives of Larry and Karen.

Listening to Karen and Larry, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Jarvis, Ont., describe the whirlwind of events that led to this evening one is struck by the faith and trust of the Brices and the obvious rightness of their new family.

When Karen and Larry were married six and a half years ago they wanted to have children right away. Karen was almost 30 and Larry almost 40. Early in their marriage they discovered they would not readily be able to have children of their own and began looking into the option of adoption. They were listed with a Christian adoption agency and Children's Aid and they waited.

Karen and Larry, who has since received his doctorate from Knox College at the University of Toronto and authored the book *The Gamble of Faith,* knew the doors in Romania were opening two years ago but they didn't know where to begin looking into the idea of adopting a Romanian child.

Then "the Lord's providence started opening the doors," says Larry as he describes the first step in their adventure. At a minister's prayer group two months ago Larry met a man who knew of a couple in British Columbia who had just returned from Romania with an adopted child. The man gave Larry that family's phone number.

"Three weeks later we had established our contacts in B.C. and Romania and had assembled the 15 separate documents that would be required to adopt a Romanian child," Karen explained. Then, on October 17, four weeks after the prayer group meeting, the Brices flew to Bucharest, Romania.

According to Larry there had been a mix-up and the Brices and the six other families in their group had arrived a day earlier than their contact person had expected.

The events that followed made God's hand in their lives seem obvious to the Brices. All the hotels in and around Bucharest were booked because of a summit meeting; the six families had nowhere to stay.

An English-speaking Romanian businessperson saw the plight of the group and he and his wife offered to put up the whole group in their three-bedroom apartment for the night.

"Our Romanian friends saw the opportunity to help us (and make some money) when they learned the reason for our trip," says Larry. The Romanian woman was a nurse and was very familiar with the system of orphanages, according to Larry.

So the couple offered to house, guide and translate for any members of the group who wanted to stay with them. Three couples did, including the Brices. The others met with their original contact the next day.

This turned out to be the right decision for the Brices because the next day, only their second day in Romania, Larry came upon Erika in an orphanage outside Bucharest.

"I had waited until everyone else had picked out a child," says Larry thinking back. "I was just so grateful to be there that I didn't want to be selfish. When I finally picked up Erika, who's diaper was wet, I thought she was a beautiful child. I handed her to the lady beside me who agreed with me but promptly put her back in her crib." But Larry couldn't leave her, "Her [Romanian] name said it: *Luminita;* it means "little light" and that's what she was."

During their second week, Karen found Alena in another orphanage near Bucharest. The Brices had decided before they left that they would look for a three-year-old like Alena. They had watched a program on ABC's "20/20" program about the orphanages and institutions in Romania from which they learned that at three, the children would be re-classified to either go to school facilities or to institutions. In some cases children were wrongly diagnosed, due in large part to a lack of trained medical staff, and normal children were sent to institutions for mentally handicapped.

"If we could prevent that from happening to a child, great," says Karen, and agrees with Larry when he adds, "You can't go in there with a saviour attitude, though; the children are a joy and a blessing to you as much as you are to them."

The Brices said they had a very different experience than the horrible impression with which "20/20" had left them. "The orphanages we saw were described to us as average. They were warm and clean and, considering what they had to work with, the staff members were excellent and loving," says Karen, although she admits she was concerned about the places which TV

See **FAMILY** -- p. 2.

Turn off TV, read to children, experts say

Marian Van Til

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — According to numbers released by Statistics Canada during this International Literacy Year which is almost over, at least one million Canadians are "functionally illiterate." That means they can't read or write well enough to function adequately in society.

The popular perception seems to be that most of that very large number of illiterate Canadians must be immigrants who can't read or write English. But the statistics show that is not the case. Fully 70 per cent were born in Canada and presumably have experienced some part of Canada's education system.

Despite that, many educators insist that the problem is not so much an indictment on Canada's public school system as it is proof that "many children have grown up without being told that it is important in our world to be able to read," reports the Toronto-based ethnic news service *Canadian Scene.*

Many teachers are convinced that "the child who is read to regularly at an early age is going to learn to read, and many of them are reading before they go to school," the news service further reports.

"Parents who read to their children are giving them a knowledge of words which are essential tools in thinking. At the same time they give them something special — a sense of wonder, a sense of values, an ability to visualize and comprehend within the mind, which is something television cannot do," literacy experts agree.

Those same experts agree that television is a "powerful influence in our society" and can be useful if not abused. Surveys culled from selected cities across Canada, however, indicate that more than half of all school children "spend more time with television than with their teachers *and* parents."

All that passive viewing, it is noted, negatively affects a child's ability to concentrate and *think* because TV "is a one-way communicator that rules out any response." Not only that, but Canadian media guru Marshall McLuhan has pointed out in his book *The Gutenburg Galaxy* that "it is the ear, not the eye, that is the primary receptive organ of the brain" — that is, hearing sticks with us longer and is probably more important than seeing. Those factors may explain, educators have concluded, "why so many school-age children are unable to express themselves coherently."

Canadian Scene notes other advice which says: "The child who is talked to and read to becomes involved at a very early age with words and ideas. By the age of two the child will respond to the rhythms of simple children's poems. By three the child can enjoy stories and there is a vast library of suitable stories from which to choose."

Those stories, of course, can serve purposes in addition to just being fun: through stories parents can pass on their religious faith and morals, a sense of history, respect for others and for the environment, for example, and many other important values.

Parents need to be as concerned about feeding their children's minds as they are about properly meeting physical needs, and the earlier that mental nourishment begins, the better, literacy advocates agree.

In this issue:

"The Star is in Place" is C.C.'s last Christmas story of the year . . pp. 6-7

1990 has been International Literacy Year: in a short story by Sonya Vanderveen-Feddema, a man aptly named Malachi Born finds that breaking his chains of illiteracy feels like "riding the wind" . . . . pp. 10-11

Bert Witvoet concludes his Eastern Europe series recounting "The Glory of Moldavia and the Shame of Bucharest" . . . . . pp. 12-13

Christian Children's Fund brings aid to Romanian orphanages

Alison de Groot

SCARBOROUGH, Ont. — The staff at the Christian Children's Fund involved in the Fund's Romanian project will tell you that, unlike the orphanages the Brice family saw around Bucharest, many orphanages in Romania are in deplorable condition. For that reason, the Fund has decided to try and help 14 orphanages in Romania's northern region.

The Fund is beginning with four of the 14 institutions it looked at this summer. These four were chosen because they were the most in need of help, says Adrienne Clements, a senior program officer for the Fund.

"Some buildings we saw had no heat and some had no electricity. Even some of the ones that had electricity didn't have light bulbs or appliances," explains Clements who was in Romania this summer researching the institutions that her organization would eventually sponsor. "Most places had at least a washer, and some had a dryer," adds Clements, "but they often weren't working. In one home we walked into a room where clothes were soaking. The smell was unbearable. They didn't even [redacted] detergent."

AIDS spreading

Clements describes other problems she saw on her inspection, including staff trying to prepare meals for often over a hundred children on old-fashioned wood burning stoves; showers and toilets not working; and a lack of medicine and medical supplies.

"Staff were reusing the old-fashioned glass needles, which is OK if they're sterilized, but these places didn't have sterilizing equipment. Seventy per cent of the kids we tested with our own equipment were HIV positive (had been exposed to the AIDS virus)."

The Fund is currently using its successful sponsorship program to direct help to four orphanages, eventually hoping to expand aid to all 14 orphanages they saw. The Fund is also seeking private and corporate donations of supplies and equipment.

The sponsorship program has proven to be successful for other countries where Christian Children's Fund has been involved, like Ethiopia. People are given the opportunity to sponsor a single child for a monthly donation. Sponsors receive a photo and personal history of their child and progress reports along the way.

At the receiving end, in this case Romania, the money is used to improve the nutrition, healthcare, staff training, clothing and facilities of the children.

According to Clements, the four orphanages they are starting will represent about 1,480 children. There are 4,000 children in the 14 homes Clements visited. The four orphanages are located in Piatra Neamt in northeastern Romania, near Moldavia.

"This is a different experience for us," says Clements. "In Ethiopia, for example, the children are part of families, part of communities around them. These children are isolated from society and have been isolated for so long that they have no social skills."

Clements says that when the children turn 18, if they are not mentally handicapped, they are released from state support and left to fend for themselves in the workforce. Although some survive, notes Clements, success is often impossible for many lack the necessary social skills.

Clements says staff members at most of these orphanages were pleasant and doing the best they could under the circumstances, but help is definitely needed.

Family complete for Christmas

... continued from page 1.

here in North America had shown viewers.

"People have to understand the Romanians are concerned about what happens to these children," says Larry. "Some people who were there to find children had a kind of commercial attitude. They treated the hosts like employees. But the birth-parents of both our children had to be contacted and they had to give permission for us to take the children out of the country."

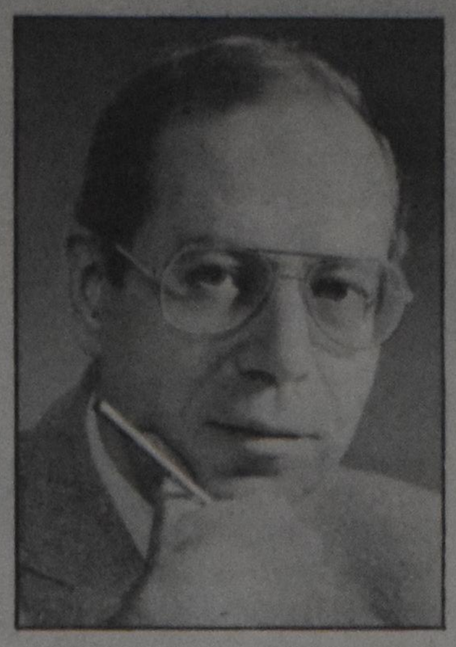
Although the whole process was an emotional roller coaster for Larry and Karen, waiting to pass each stage successfully, everything fell into place. By November 15 they had come home to a supportive and loving family and a generous congregation. "We have two children to bring up in the Lord, to take our place as Christians in the world," Larry concludes as Karen gathers up the girls to pose for a family portrait.

Columnist puts away pen

Long-time *Calvinist Contact* columnist William R. Rang has decided to retire from his column, effective immediately. Rang first wrote for C.C. in 1953. We thank him for his many years of faithful service and wish him God's continued blessing as an educator and in all his endeavours. **MVT**

Last issue of 1990

Due to the Christmas holidays C.C. will not publish a Dec. 28 issue. See you on Jan. 4, 1991!



Jim Romahn

In it till the cows come home

Steve May is living proof that a city person can become a dairy farmer.

He's also living proof that it's not easy.

May drew a round of applause from an audience attending public hearings before the federal task force on dairy policy in Guelph, Ont., recently when he outlined his story.

He stated his pursuit by studying at the University of Guelph for two years, then went to work as a hired hand for a dairy farmer.

He eventually took over that farm, renting the cows, the quota, the barn and the land from the owner.

Now, 14 years later, he has bought his own farm. But he still needed a lot of help from his friends.

The farmer who sold to him offered him a big mortgage. In fact, May said he put down less than five per cent. And he says the farmer knocked down the price because he had heard of May's reputation from others and wanted the pleasure of knowing his farm would be in good hands, that he could drive by and see it being properly tended.

Determination, community help

The barn needed renovating, but May couldn't afford a contractor. He intended to do it himself, with help from his family. But his neighbours saw his need and turned out to help. The result is renovations that cost a quarter of the commercial rate.

With all that help and 14 years behind him, you might be tempted to think May's not much of a dairy farmer. Think again!

He's milking about 40 cows and they're producing within the top four to five per cent in the nation. His herd BCA, a measure of performance, is 195, which indicates it's 95 per cent above the average when the BCA index was established.

That doesn't come easy. May said his strength is "cow psychology — being able to know that something's wrong just by looking at her, and jumping on problems before they blow up."

It also requires long hours and hard work. May said his work week averages more than 80 hours.

And there's precious little money to live on, given the bills that have to be paid. He figures the family spends less than $10,000 a year.

And he considers his debt "a lifetime commitment."

Bitterness could come easy

May said he used to feel bitter about the sons of dairy farmers who inherit quotas, if not entire farms and cows. But not anymore. He has observed that some of them fail because they haven't really learned the important lessons of dairy farmers, or they have picked up bad habits from previous generations, or they have struggles taking over the management reins from parents.

There are government programs to help young people get into farming, but May said he didn't qualify for most of them. For example, he couldn't get the loan he needed from the Farm Credit Corporation and barely managed to get it from a bank by finding a manager willing to bend the rules. Nor did he get one of Ontario's Beginning Farmer Programs loans; they got snapped up like cookies at a children's party, and in some cases by parents who used their children as fronts to get access to cheap credit.

May said all he has ever received from the provincial government is a $2,000 rebate to bring his interest bills down from about 12 to eight per cent.

Sacrifices

May told his story because he wanted the task force to see that he can't stand any major changes in Canada's dairy policy — not any relaxation of import controls, any reduction in prices or his production quota, not any major cut in the direct federal subsidy of $276 million a year, a subsidy that accounts for about five to seven per cent of the income on a typical Ontario dairy farm, or 25 per cent for a cream shipper.

But I took some different lessons from what he and other dairy farmers had to say to the task force. One is that young dairy farmers continue to make tremendous sacrifices to break into the business. Despite all that Canadians have done to help dairy farmers, the struggle is every bit as great today as it has ever been.

Another is that May is a good farmer, respected, trusted and liked by his neighbours. He should be welcomed in any rural community anywhere in the world, and he should be able to adapt and compete. Yet the world's dairy policies are such that he depends entirely on our marketing board system, a monopoly within a free enterprise economy, a socialist system within a capitalist country. And because the system is so inconsistent with the economic values and views of most North Americans, it's under constant attack.

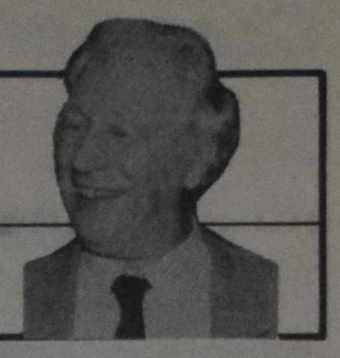
Those attacks make dairy farmers nervous and give rise to a persistent *angst* and tension. What's more, the situation is similar (even worse) in the U.S. and the European Community where dairy farmers also depend on government policies, albeit different types of policies, for their living.

And so I was doubly impressed when I attended the annual meeting of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario a few days later, and the dairy farmer who is the out-going president, Jack VanderKooy of Simcoe, said in this time of change and worry, we need to remind ourselves to place our faith in God, who does not change.

Merry Christmas to our dairy farmers! And to you, too.

Jim Romahn is a farm writer in Kitchener, Ont.

Pressreview



Carl D. Tuyl

Tiptoeing into Toronto came Frere Jacques Parizeau with the tidings that La Belle Province is about to separate itself from our sea-to-sea dominion. Mr. Parizeau smilingly urged one and all to negotiate a reasonable settlement, and to do it now. A majority of Quebecers seem, indeed, to favour a form of divorce. Not so Jean Chretien, the ordinary fellow from Shawinigan who went all the way to Beausejour, New Brunswick, to get a seat in the House. I guess he did not trust his fellow Quebecers. Monsieur sent Chretien a telegram of congratulation. Nice, eh?

★★★

The long-awaited government "green plan" compared to a sermon that missed the point of the text. It zig-zagged through the many environmental subjects like a ship lost in thick fog not being able to find the harbour, and it never anchored down. Too bad, really, for this was one area where all Canadians would have supported the government in a more direct and forceful approach. Environment Minister Robert de Cotret said that the details of the plan still have to be worked out. Ministry officials who worked on the document nobly sacrificed their vacations in order to get it into print.

★★★

There was a lot of heat at the Commons' C.C. (no, not Canadian Club) — rather the Culture and Communications Committee. President Veilleux reached the boiling point when Opposition members needled him. Veillex fired back with all guns ablaze.

★★★

The "other place," a.k.a. 'the red chamber' might become X-rated. Some of the senatorial filibusters were marked by sexist content and dirty jokes. Sixty-seven-year-old Senator Gigantes spoke for 18 hours. Wisdom does not always come with age. There must be a lot of bargain brains in those seats there. Quickly, of course, we went to the *Guinness Book of World Records* to find out how Gigantes' performance compared. Well, the record is held by a Texan legislator who spoke for 43 hours and 41 minutes. The Senate Speaker ruled an end to the funny stuff.

★★★

The Quebec Health Minister, Marc-Yvan Cote, wants to revamp the whole $8.6 billion health and social service system of his province. What the minister envisions among others is that every Quebecer will get an annual statement that will show how much his or her health has cost the province. I guess that's to make you feel guilty for being sick. Nice touch. That's perhaps why Premier Bourassa went to Maryland for treatment. The premier came home again with a clean bill of health but looking pale and tired.

★★★

An idea for Monsieur: the new mayor of Victoria, B.C., plans to be available to all comers, no appointment necessary on the third Friday of each month.

★★★

The federal government is spying on the Belanger-Campeau Commission. It continues to keep tabs on the activities of the meetings of the 36-member panel. The other commission, the Spicer one, is already receiving reserves. Two of its original members have quit. What is the Spicer forum really doing?

★★★

And then there was the recent shuttle space exploration that was to unfold another long-hidden cosmic secret. Alas, no cosmic secrets could be revealed for the toilet got plugged up. Just reading the paper can make your day, can't it?

★★★

The U.N. sanctions against Iraq do not have the predicted results. To put it bluntly, they do not work very well. Tea from Iran, beer and canned goods from Jordan, light bulbs and packaged goods from Turkey, all with production dates long after August 6 when the embargo was imposed, are for sale in Iraq. Fruit and vegetable stalls are piled high with a variety of fresh produce. There is a shortage of cereals, but otherwise the smugglers are having a hey-day at the porous borders.

★★★

Don't cry for Argentina! The country saw its fourth military rebellion since 1987. The president ordered the uprising crushed and the army obeyed. Perhaps the fragile relationship between the military and the elected government is moving toward a somewhat firmer base.

★★★

Germans are really going all out in trying to keep the Russians supplied with food. The Yankees, too, are sending all kinds of economic assistance. Even Israel is entering into diplomatic discussions with the Ruskies. The times, they are a-changin'. The December 7 anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour received hardly any notice. Today the Japanese would not bomb Pearl Harbour; they now own it.

★★★

Two parties woke up and smelled the coffee. The communist government of Albania will allow opposition. All in favour said aye, and the five nay-sayers were, in true communist fashion, fired immediately. And on April 28, 1991, the last voteless women of Europe, those of the Swiss half-canton of Appenzell Inner-Rhoden, will at last be able to vote in the Landsgemeinde, the annual open air meeting at which important cantonal issues are debated and decided by a show of hands.

★★★

Hey, what happened? The Church of England admitted surprise at the latest statistics from its congregations. These statistics show a rise in membership for the first time since 1968 when annual surveys began. Ten of 43 dioceses saw increases from one per cent to seven per cent between 1987 and 1988. A revival in good old England?

★★★

Blood flowed again in South Africa where Zulus attacked supporters of the ANC in the squatters camp of Phola Park. It is rumoured that South African police forces are more sympathetic to the Zulus than to the ANC.

★★★

Dr. Mel Bircoll from, where else, Beverly Hills, is now offering a whole line of ready-made silicone muscles for men. He will insert his stuff in any muscle you desire to be augmented, from pectorals to forearms and biceps, you name it. And in *Success,* the magazine for today's entrepreneurial mind, I read the following ad: "Get rich while you sleep! Send S.A.S.E. and $1.00. McDonald-Gill, 210 Oaknoll #18-5, Pasadena, CA 91101. Anything for church treasurers?

★★★

I guess it is about time to express my wishes for 1991 to all my faithful readers. May your head not go bald; may your toilet not get plugged up; may you keep a firm hold on reality; and may your stomach never rumble in public. May your religion travel with you wherever you go; may your loved one not transfer her or his affection, and in believing, may you touch the hem of heaven. Have a good one!

Carl Tuyl is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada. He lives in Kingston, Ont.

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Commentary

'Us' and 'Them'

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Editor (on sabbatical):
Bert Witvoet

General Manager:
Stan de Jong

Acting Editor:
Marian Van Til

Assistant Editor:
Robert Vander Vennen

Editorial Assistant:
Alison de Groot

Regular Contributors:
Paul DeGroot, Stan de Jong, Anne Hutten, Reinder J. Klein, Angela Terpstra, Nandy Heule

Accounting:
Amy Van Dokkumburg

Advertising:
Suzanna Brasz

Circulation & Mailing:
Grace Bowman

Layout & Design:
Cecilia van Wylick

Typesetting:
Kim Yungblut

Proofreading:
Willy Suk-Kleer

Editorial Advisory Board:
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261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4,
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Tel.: (416) 682-8311 or FAX: (416) 682-8313

I'm not sure how old a child is when, if brought up in a Reformed Christian home, he or she begins to realize that not everyone views the world like his or her family does.

My earliest naive recollections of that Great Divide which theologians call "the Antithesis" came simply: when I was age four or five I was not allowed to play with Kim, my best neighbourhood friend, on Sundays — I wasn't to go to his house; he wasn't to come to mine.

I recall at about that same early age starting to mentally/spiritually sort out who was on what team: most of our neighbours seemed to be playing for The World; we and a few others were on Christ's side.

I can't say that I was taught to make those Us and Them distinctions with any feeling of superiority about being on the "right side." Rather I recollect feeling a sense of urgency, even sadness, about Kim and his family not having embraced the Truth.

Thus, an awareness of the Antithesis became deeply ingrained in me and is still there. Over the years I have discovered that that constant, sometimes nearly sub-conscious, but always lurking awareness of Us and Them characterizes many if not most people who grew up with Calvin's Reformation heritage.

Two-edged sword

I have also discovered that awareness to be a two-edged sword. The positive edge keeps us aprised of our discipleship: we are in the world but mayn't be — constitutionally *cannot* be — of it. We are to be distinct, and sometimes that distinction has a cost. Taking up our crosses is no day at the stadium, unless the event is the Christians versus the Lions. We have to be willing to pay whatever price God exacts of us.

That sword also has a harmful edge, for both "Us" and "Them." Making the assumption that those we run into daily in our lives are against Christ and what we stand for unnecessarily creates a kind of siege mentality: so few of us righteous against the ugly World. What about the Lord's rebuke of Elijah for assuming that he was the only righteous one left in Israel?

Such a view, it seems to me, is really a denial of the power of God's grace, both "saving" and "common," and in a sense tries to usurp God's power to judge, which is solely his. We seem to think we can, on his behalf, separate the sheep from the goats. Needless to say, we are not capable of doing a blameless job of it.

Just who are saved and who aren't has been a periodic preoccupation with us Reformed people over the years. Too often the doctrine of election has been twisted into a bloodless (or perhaps *bloody*), fearful theological tenet which emphasizes the dire consequences for those on the wrong side of the Great Divide.

But as Dr. John Timmer, pastor of Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., has pointed out in a sermon on Gen. 12 and Eph. 3, there's a big difference between the way the Bible speaks about election and the way theologians usually do. "Election is a story — a positive story, not a negative one," he notes. And that story doesn't say, "God deliberately rejects most people and chooses only a few. The story does not say that those whom God chooses make the team; all others do not."

What election *is* is the story "of how God chooses certain people to bless those who live under the curse," to use Timmer's words. "It is a story of how God, through the people he has chosen, graciously reaches out toward all people."

When we assume that everyone else is an unbeliever we not only distance ourselves from fellow human beings, but we also devalue our specially created common humanity.

When it comes down to it, I think that I and a lot of my fellow Reformed Christians have had a hard time taking common grace seriously and fitting it into our world-view equation. Common grace seems to muddy the waters — it often prevents us from properly determining who the good guys and bad guys are — and we like things intellectually, theologically (and socially and emotionally) neat and tidy.

We know that "if you're not for Christ, you're against him." But must we assume that everyone is against him until we know otherwise? And does it imply that all humanitarian or philanthropic works or personal acts of kindness and generosity not done specifically in Christ's name are "as filthy rags"? What about Christ's assertion that if you offer someone a cup of cold water in his name you've *offered it to him?* That's a radical statement; was he talking only to his small circle of disciples or do his words apply to all such acts?

We have spent too much time wondering who's "elect" — and, for some of us, even whether we are ourselves. And despite the emphasis of some of us on social action and addressing social issues in the here-and-now, many of us still have the sneaking suspicion that attaining heaven is all that *really* matters.

But Scripture and the Reformed confessions assure us that God is not going to write-off his world and its people, blowing it all to oblivion. Rather, all things in heaven and earth will be reconciled in Christ.

So we must emphasize that being "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," (Eph. 1) means more than being assured of our personal salvation. God chose Abraham so that "through him *all people* on the earth might be blessed." As Dr. Timmer reminds us: "Election does not first of all focus on the elect [but] on those living under the curse." Election's purpose is to set them free. If Christ doesn't want to condemn the world we certainly shouldn't. It's difficult to be ministers of reconciliation to those whom we view as spiritual adversaries who must be fought or, at least, avoided.

Timmer points out that it is in connection with Christ's mission to *unite* all things in heaven and on earth that the Bible speaks of election. "God elected us in Christ to help execute God's plan to unite all things: our election is a means toward an end. We are to be living advertisements of this unity plan. We are chosen to praise God for allowing us to see, in the far distance, and far beyond our power of description, a world in which Christ shall be all and in all." [Timmer's sermon appears in *Reformed Journal*, Sept. 1990.]

Some of us (I include myself) still need to do a better job of withholding condemnation of those we think belong to the world. We need to be ready to witness to all we meet by embracing them as those whom our Saviour loves rather than assuming that Satan has already snatched them out of Christ's hands.

Marian Van Til

ROOFTOP MUSINGS/ALYCE OOSTERHUIS

Looking in

Now that Christmas 1990 is almost upon us, I cannot help but feel that at this time of hope and joy, we deny, to our detriment, the pain and loneliness that make Christmas a celebration of agony for others.

The Edmonton newspapers have been replete with accounts of increasing numbers of suicides in the last weeks — patients who could not be admitted to overflowing psychiatric units and who could not face the pain of another joyless Christmas. For those who are "looking in" on the sparkle of Christmas present and past, the ghost of the Christmas future looms too ominously and hopelessly to give courage to live another day.

Illusion of warmth

Images of the little Matchstick Girl flash through my mind as I reconstruct how it must feel to do no more than look in upon others' hope. She froze to death while standing on the street looking in on families' Christmas cheer. She lit her matches one by one to create a sensation of the warmth that she could see through the livingroom windows of families gathered around a festive Christmas meal. As the last match flickered and sputtered, she died contentedly, embraced by an angelic warmth of having to suffer cold no more.

Too "heavy" for a time of bubbly and cheer? Yet it is precisely at Christmastime that all the contrasts of pain and joy, hope and despair, past hurts and future gains, are moulded sharply into a relief that stings while it soothes.

It has been like that since the very first Christmas celebration when the Christ child was whisked to safety amidst the screams of the bereaved parents of Bethlehem infants. For a pondering Mary, the tales of these infant deaths must have moved her to hold her child that much closer to her breast, hoping to stave off the future agonies while knowing the inevitability of pain.

Shutting out the pain

In our too frequently hyped-up, sentimentalized gloss of Christmas cheer amidst family and friends, we shut out the memory and awareness of pain. Maybe it is the depressed and the suicidal who are confronting us with the genuine hope for Christmas as they cry out, "No more!" — while we insist that they continue in a delusion of goodness and warmth.

Six months after my mother died, my father insisted that the celebrations be minimized; and so, no tree graced our livingroom window and presents consisted of needed toques and scarves knitted by our oldest sister. We tried to celebrate but did not talk of the gloom that prevailed. I remember it as an artifically-contrived celebration of cheer.

Looking back on that Christmas time, we would have celebrated more hopefully if we had included Mom's empty chair in the family circle and spoken tearfully of each other's pain, while the glow of candlelight played upon our hearts to stir the hope of being enabled to live another day.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis is assistant professor of education psychology at The King's College in Edmonton.

Longer Letter

Love, yes; accept as right, no

Calvinist Contact (Nov. 30, 1990) carried an article about what "acceptance" of homosexuals means. I have a few questions which I'd like to ask the AWARE group.

The issue at stake is not whether we should love our homosexual brothers and lesbian sisters. The Bible leaves no room for debate regarding our love for them. God loved us while we were still sinners, helpless, hopeless and enemies of him; yet out of love he gave us his Son to die for us and to transform us into the image of Christ. Christ set us his "love" example and we are commanded to follow that by following him.

The issue at stake is a different one and can be stated in a few words: according to God's Word, is homosexuality and lesbianism and their practices sin or not?

If no sin is involved, then my question is: "What's all the fuss about this issue? Let's rejoice with couples of the same sex about their faithful love union and let's be happy to have them with us in our church pews and on the church pulpits. And why not celebrate their union with a church "wedding" service like we do with heterosexual couples? Only the fact that no natural offspring could result from such a relationship might cast a shadow on the festivities. But what if according to God's Word homosexuality and lesbianism is sin?

To find the answer to that question we have to go to the Scriptures and not to the "wisdom" of human beings. In Romans 14 and 15 Paul talks about weak and strong brothers and sisters who differ in their views about certain holy days and the eating of some kinds of food. These are not "sin" issues; God accepts both views and both groups of people and tells us to do the same.

However, homosexuality is not listed in these categories; instead it is grouped in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 with "the sexually immoral, idolators, adulterers, male prostitutes, the greedy, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers and these will not inherit the kingdom of God." Other passages in the Old Testament and the New Testament are also very clear that homosexuality is sin and an abomination to God.

If homosexuality is indeed sin which without repentance leads to eternal death, then it is our duty as Christians to confront our homosexual brothers and lesbian sisters *with love and out of love* with what God himself has to say about this issue. That the Church in general has been condemning and judging without love and compassion and support is a dark blot on the Church of Christ.

Nevertheless, if God calls it sin, we cannot water this down with our own insight of wishful interpretation. Christ never beat around the bush where sin was concerned: he never compromised sin, condoned it or overlooked it. On the contrary: he died and suffered for it in an agonizing way.

Again: if homosexuality and its practices is not sin according to the Bible, please, will somebody out there show me that from the Word of God? I am open to and would sincerely study the opposite view.

Ineke Parlevliet
Niagara Falls, Ont.

C.C. feeds roots

I would like to renew my subscription for another year.

I really enjoy getting *Calvinist Contact* as it keeps me in touch with my roots. I especially appreciated the article on depression and mood disorders a while back. I've shown it to a lot of my church friends, who are Brethren affiliated.

Thank you and keep up the good work!

Mieke Krause
Powassan, Ont.

Says thanks for 'quality stuff'

I've been a subscriber to *Calvinist Contact* for many, many years. I've never been disappointed in it. [But] since I have access to C.C. in the staff room of Sarnia Christian School, I won't renew my subscription this year. If, however, I find this arrangement less than satisfactory, I'll renew promptly! (I do have to be resourceful.)

Thank you for always producing quality stuff. I particularly enjoy VanderVennen's articles. So, God bless you, and I'll continue enjoying *Calvinist Contact* at my job.

Diane Plug
Sarnia, Ont.

Prayer and fasting can have powerful effect

Having heard this morning the latest news about the United Nations resolution approving entering into a war with Iraq, possibly around mid-January, my thoughts went back centuries ago to when Mordacai's people were in danger of being killed and eliminated by the wicked schemes of the haughty Haman.

But as Queen Esther at that time urged her uncle to prepare her Jewish people for fasting and prayer, I got wondering whether also bloodshed in the Middle East at this time could be avoided if we all, from time to time, would pray to God that he himself, in his own way, will deal with Saddam Hussein. If then the Lord should allow for a war to break out, well, so be it. But we then [could] well feel somewhat better about the fact that we prayed in sincerity for the restraining of the evil forces there.

Jane Roseboom
Renfrew, Ont.

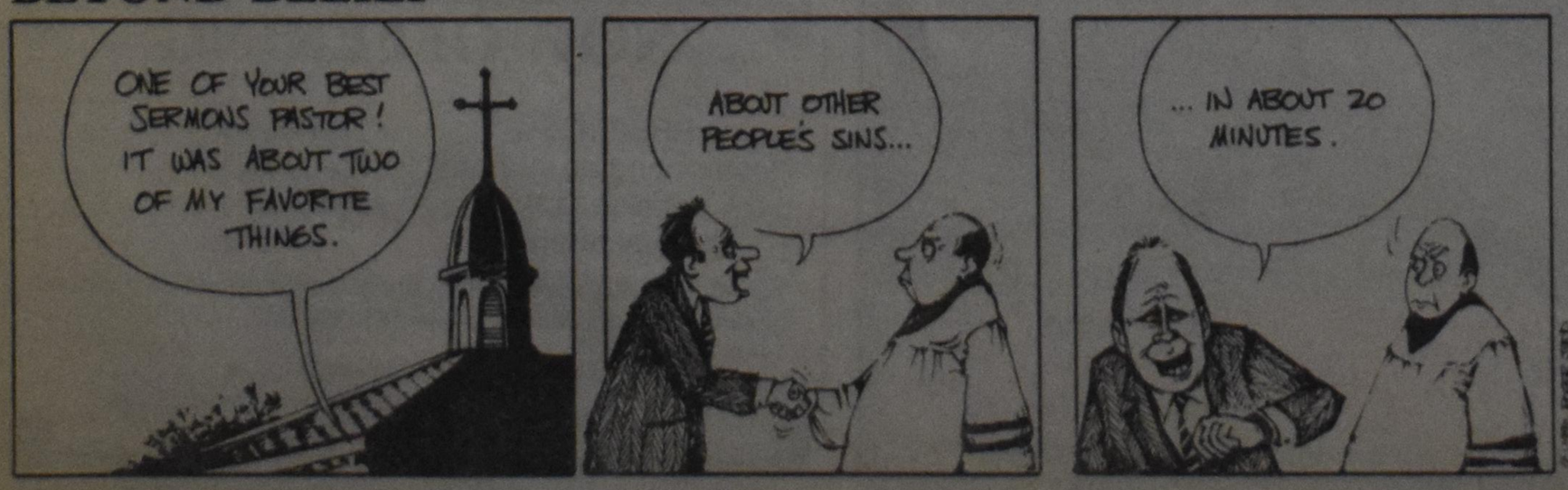
We have much to learn from Natives

My thanks to Robert VanderVennen for a thought-provoking editorial on Native spirituality, and to Willem Hart for a spirited letter defending Native justice issues (C.C., Nov. 23, 1990).

As one who has become keenly interested in creation spirituality, I was glad to see this topic discussed in *Calvinist Contact*. Along with VanderVennen I believe that we have much to learn from our Native brothers and sisters. I hope that future issues of *Calvinist Contact* will explore this topic further.

Ted Hogeterp
Oshawa, Ont.

BEYOND BELIEF



Christmas Story

The star is in place

Jacoba Bos

"Grandma, you think the baby will come before Christmas?" Jenny Brown looked up from her knitting into the big brown eyes of her four-year-old granddaughter.

"I don't know, Lisa, maybe it will. That would be nice wouldn't it?" Her knitting slid to the floor as she bent over to put Lisa on her knee.

Lisa contentedly settled in her grandmother's lap, her hair tickling Jenny's nose. "Daddy said that the ulter ... ulter ..."

"Ultrasound?" Jenny prompted.

"Yeah, the ultrasound showed the baby on TV. Was I once on TV like that, too?" Lisa giggled at the thought. "On TV in my mommy's tummy. And without any clothes on," she added as she snuggled in the warm shelter of her grandmother's arms. "Did you see in my mommy's tummy grandma?"

"No, Lisa, I didn't see you before you were born. I saw you when your dad and mom brought you home. You were beautiful. You looked just like your doll, the one with the dark hair."

"That's Christy, Grandma; she's my favourite. Was I your favourite too, Grandma?"

Jenny's arms tightened around the little girl as if to protect her. "Yes, you'll always be my favourite, Lisa Knight."

"Grandma, do you think I'll get another doll for Christmas? Another one like Christy?"

"Who knows, maybe you will," Jenny said.

Lisa sighed contently, her long eyelashes closing slowly. She slept securely in her grandmother's arm, unaware of the turmoil going on in Jenny's mind.

Was it only a week ago, Jenny wondered, that she got the anxious phone call from her eldest son? Mark's voice had been shaky.

"Mom, Lynda is in the hospital with back pains. The doctor thinks she may go into labour too early. They did an ultrasound and the doctor said that Lynda may have to be in the hospital till ... till the baby comes."

"But isn't that in February? That's still two months away; and where is Lisa?" Jenny had blurted out, wishing that the miles would melt away between her and her son, wishing that she could kiss away this heartache like she used to kiss away the pain of skinned knees and bruised elbows.

"Lisa was at the neighbour's today," Mark said. "I was going to ask you, Mom. Could you come over and stay with us. Lynda says you're so good with Lisa, and it'll be nice for Lynda to have someone to help her when she comes home with the baby." Mark's voice trailed off, as if he had said something he did not really believe would happen.

"Of course I'll come" Jenny assured Mark. "I'll look into train connections right away and I'll call you about the time of arrival at the station."

"Lord, keep this unborn child and Mark and Lynda in your hands," she had prayed while she made travel arrangements and packed her suitcase. When she locked her apartment, her thoughts went back to the time she arrived home from the hospital with Mark in her arms. She remembered the exhilaration when, together with her husband, they had marvelled at the miracle of birth. Mark was much like his father; he was gifted with a keen mind which was always exploring and analysing.

★ ★ ★

"I cannot believe in God anymore." With that statement Mark had put a wall between himself and the rest of the family. "Science can explain exactly how the universe came into being. Besides, if there is a God why does he allow so much grief in this world?" Mark had said to his parents.

"If you don't believe that God exists, tell me: why do you criticize him?" his father had challenged him.

Mark could not answer that question. It became the wedge between parents and child. At his father's funeral Mark had shrugged off as meaningless words any interest shown in his spiritual life.

Mark's climb up the corporate ladder had been quick and successful. The home he bought for himself and his wife was like a picture from a magazine, and Lisa, their planned child was like a rare gem — perfect in every way. It looked like Mark Knight managed very well without God ....

★ ★ ★

"Mom, where are you? Why is everything dark? The Christmas tree isn't even lit. Didn't Lisa want to do that? Oh, there you are ...." Mark gently lifted his sleeping daughter from his mother's arms and laid her on the chesterfield.

Jenny tried to get up. Her leg felt numb and yarn was wound around her ankles. "Oh, hello, Mark, I didn't realize it was this late. Shall I make a pot of tea for us?" She hummed an old tune while she made tea in the neat kitchen.

"These are the dark days before Christmas all right." Jenny shivered as she closed the livingroom drapes to the grey afternoon outside.

Lisa opened her eyes. "When is Mommy coming home with the baby, Daddy?"

"Yes, how is Lynda? Did you come from the hospital just now?" Jenny asked while she stirred Lisa's tea. "Careful; don't spill, Honey," she said to Lisa, placing the mug on the marble coffee table.

"Yes," Mark stirred his tea slowly. "I saw Lynda this afternoon." His voice was tense.

"And how is she?" Jenny asked.

"She had more pain today. The doctor ordered complete bed-rest. He told Lynda that they are doing everything possible for her and the baby, but the outcome is from ... God." The last word fell like a bolt of lightning in the room.

"Who's God, Daddy. Is he like Santa Claus?" Lisa asked, wide-eyed.

"I ... I can't tell you now, Lisa." Mark stammered. "Grandma will tell you when she brings you to bed tonight." He turned to Jenny.

"I'm going back to the hospital now. If you could give Lisa her dinner and put her to bed early, I'll try to be home in time so you can visit Lynda," Mark said. "She asked for you, Mom," he added as he reached for his coat.

"Daddy, the lights," Lisa protested. "Oh Lisa, I don't have time tonight, Mommy is waiting." "But Daddy!" tears filled Lisa's eyes.

"OK then." Mark lifted Lisa and put her on his shoulder. "Here comes the magic fairy transforming our home into a radiant palace." Mark tried to sound cheerful as Lisa turned on the switch to illuminate the Christmas tree lights. Lisa clapped her hands in delight at the sight of the colourful, glittering spectacle, while Jenny watched from her easy chair, thoroughly enjoying the display. "Look, Daddy. The star is falling. Why is there a star on the Christmas tree, Daddy?"

Mark sighed as he put Lisa back on her feet. "Look, Lisa, I've got to go now. Ask Grandma about the star tonight. Now let's have a big hug." He squatted down beside her and nearly lost his balance as Lisa squeezed her arms tightly around his neck. "That's a hug for Mommy too," she said.

"Here are some muffins for you, Mark. You must get something to eat, you know," Jenny said as she put a package in Mark's coat pocket.

"Don't worry, Mom. I'll be fine. It's Lynda and the baby I'm worried about." His knuckles turned white around the doorknob he was holding.

Jenny shivered in the chill flow of cold air. "I'll try to be home by eight," Mark said. "That'll give you half an hour to visit Lynda. Bye, Mom." He stooped to kiss her.

"Bye, Mark." Jenny hugged her son. "I'll be thinking of you." And praying, she thought as she watched the car lights disappear up the dark street.

Later that evening after the few dishes were put away in the tidy cupboard and Lisa's hair had been brushed to a golden sheen, Jenny told her granddaughter about God who loved her and who knew her even before she was born.

"Did God see the ultrasound

Continued on page 7 ...

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The star is in place

... continued from page 6.

too?" Lisa asked, her eyes reflecting the multicoloured beauty of the Christmas tree.

"No, Lisa, God doesn't need ultrasound. He sees us just like I see you now. "Does God see the Christmas tree, too? Look Grandma, the star's gonna fall. Shall I fix it? I can reach it if you'll lift me real high. Why do we put a star up high in a Christmas tree, Grandma? Sometimes I see the real stars from my bedroom window." Lisa stopped to take a breath.

"We'll leave the star for your daddy to fix. Let's run upstairs now. If we see a star from your bedroom window I'll tell you about the Christmas star."

Tucked in bed, Lisa listened spellbound to the story of the brilliant star which led the wisemen to the baby Jesus.

"How many stars are there in the sky, Grandma? Did you ever count them? Daddy knows, doesn't he?"

"No, Lisa. Nobody knows that. Only God knows because he put them all in their place. Look, Christy is already asleep." Jenny said as she tucked in the blankets around Lisa and her doll. "Good night, my favourite Lisa."

"Good night, my favourite Grandma," Lisa sighed. She was soon asleep. An angel in pink pyjamas, Jenny thought as she tiptoed out of the room.

The shrill sound of the telephone tore through the quiet atmosphere of the Knight's living room. Jenny glanced at her watch. Nine o'clock and Mark wasn't home yet. Hesitantly, she answered the telephone. It was Mark. He sounded worried.

"Lynda is being wheeled into the delivery room. She could be having the baby tonight or ..." his voice faded away.

"I can't hear you, Mark," Jenny tried to sound calm.

"The doctors are doing a C-section. There's danger of the baby being stillborn."

"Oh Mark!" Jenny sighed.

"The doctor asked me to pray for him, and also for Lynda and the baby. Will you do it, Mom?"

"Of course, Son. Now you get to Lynda. Give her all my love and tell her not to worry about Lisa. She's like an angel, brightening everything about her."

The darkness was giving way to morning light when Jenny heard Mark's car in the driveway. She jumped up from the chesterfield where she had been resting and straightened her clothes on her way to the front door. One look at Mark's face told her the good news.

"Mom, we've got a baby boy." His embrace nearly knocked Jenny off her feet. "The doctor said everything went far better than he expected. The baby is healthy and just a beautiful boy. Just five and a half pounds he weighed. Dark hair like Lynda, and a nose like Lisa. I think he even looks like you, Mom." He kissed his mother gently, suddenly stuck for words. His eyes grew misty.

"Daddy, are you going to put the star in place now?" In two steps Mark was half way up the stairs. He swept Lisa into his arms. "Lisa darling, you know what we have?"

"A Christmas tree," Lisa guessed.

"No, we have that already, but you know what we just received last night? A brand new ..."

"Baby," Lisa shouted, dropping Christy to the floor. She hugged Mark tightly. "When is Mommy bringing him home, Daddy? When can I play with him and when can he walk?"

Mark sat down before answering all the "whens." He sipped the orange juice Jenny had poured for him.

"You must be hungry," his mother said as she busied herself with coffee pot and toaster. Soon a warm aroma filled the kitchen.

Lisa climbed on Mark's knee. "Don't you have to go to work, Daddy?" "No, Lisa, I'm staying home today so we can visit Mommy and the baby."

Lisa clapped her hands in glee. "Can Grandma come too? Can she see the baby? Grandma told me that God saw the baby in Mommy's tummy. And without an ultrasound," she added, proudly flaunting her knowledge of the English language. Her face brightened. "Now you'll have time to put the star in place, Daddy. Grandma told me that God put all the stars in their place. All the millions and zillions."

"Let's have breakfast first; then we'll see what we're going to do today," Mark said as he pushed Lisa's chair close to the table. Then he sat down. "Mom, would you say grace with us?"

In the whirlwind of activities that usually accompany the birth of a child, the star on the Christmas tree hung forgotten and askew, almost falling on the silver ball beneath it.

Lisa noticed it first when they all came home from the hospital. "Daddy, the star is almost falling off. Can you fix it now?" she pleaded, while Mark struggled with an uncooperative zipper on her snowsuit.

"Stand still, Honey. We'll get to the star as soon as we get you out of this. There you are. Now let's get the step ladder."

"Now you're like God, Daddy," Lisa giggled as she watched Mark carefully hang the star in place. "Well, a little bit like God because he can see babies in mommies' tummies and you can't see that, hey Daddy. Well, you can with ultrasound," she added pensively.

"There." Mark came down the step ladder. "The star is in place. Shall we do the lights now?" He hoisted Lisa up on his shoulder. Jenny watched the scene with intense pleasure as the living room bathed in radiant light when Lisa turned on the switch.

After tucking Lisa in bed with Christy and lots of hugs, Mark stood in her dark bedroom looking out at the stars shining like diamonds on blue velvet in the clear winter night.

"It will be cold tonight," Jenny said as she picked up her knitting, settling herself in the easy chair. "We shouldn't stay up late tonight. You sure could stand to get some sleep," she added.

A smile lit Mark's face. "You never give up mothering, do you, Mom?" Then in a more serious tone: "You know, Mom, that's one thing I'm really thankful for."

"What is it, Mark?" Jenny's eyes met her son's.

"That you and Dad didn't give up on me; and above all that God didn't give up on me, even when I rejected everything you taught me about him." He stood up, walked to the window and opened the drapes.

"Come and look at the stars, Mom," he said. Together they watched, speechless at the celestial splendor.

Mark broke the silence. "Look, there's the Big Dipper," he said, pointing to a group of stars.

"And to think that experts who study astronomy still don't know how many millions of stars there are in certain areas of the sky," Jenny said thoughtfully. "Lisa was not too far out with her zillions then, was she?" she added. "Can you imagine that some stars are even bigger than the sun? Mindboggling, isn't it?"

"It is," Mark replied. "But can you understand, Mom, how I could be such a conceited fool to think that the universe evolved without a God and that medical technology could give life, when I knew all along that only God controls life and death?"

He stared at the Christmas tree which looked like cheap tinsel compared to the spectacle in the sky.

Jenny closed the drapes slowly, as if she were wrapping a very precious gift. She turned to her son and said softly, "Remember, Mark, he who put the stars in their places will also keep your life in his hands, and also the lives of Lynda, Lisa and your little boy."

... Whose name is John," Mark said. "We named our son John because we've experienced that God is faithful."

Jacoba Bos is a free lance writer living in Strathroy, Ont.

DEADLINE FOR APPEALING YOUR 1990 PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

Tuesday, January 8th, 1991

The final day for appealing your 1990 property assessment to the Assessment Review Board is Tuesday, January 8th, 1991. Your assessment will be used to calculate your 1991 municipal and school taxes.

You should appeal your 1990 property assessment (a) if you are dissatisfied with the amount of the assessment, even after discussing it with your Regional Assessment Office; (b) if you appealed your previous assessment and the appeal has not been settled; or (c) if you received a *Notice of Property Valuation* which does not reflect a settlement of your previous appeal.

The Assessment Review Board is an agency of the Ministry of the Attorney General and operates less formally than a court of law. It is authorized to decide if your property assessment is fair and equitable, compared with similar properties in your area. You may present your own case, retain a lawyer, or ask a friend or relative to act as your agent.

A *Notice of Appeal* form is available from your municipal office, your Regional Assessment Office, or the Assessment Review Board. You may also use the reverse side of a *Notice of Property Valuation* or write a letter. Appeals should be forwarded in writing to the Regional Registrar of the Assessment Review Board at the address shown below.

If you have any questions or require assistance in filing the appeal, please contact your Regional Assessment Office. The address and telephone number are in the Blue Pages of your telephone directory, under "Property Assessment Information".

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Assessment Review Board
80 Bloor Street West, Suite 701
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1L9

Regional Registrar
Assessment Review Board
605 Sheppard Centre
2 Sheppard Ave. East
North York, Ontario
M2N 5Y7

Ministry of Revenue
Ontario

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Christian leader in India criticizes West for contributing to division

CALCUTTA, India (EP) — The general secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) recently made an appeal to North American Christians to "stop undermining the unity of the church in India" by sponsoring enterprises and events in the country "with no regard for the needs and preferences of the broader Christian community there," according to a report from World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).

The Rev. Francis Sunderarag asked the North American Council, a support arm of the Singapore-based WEF, to help reverse the current situation under which those who raise funds in North America for Third World projects are accountable to donors in the West but not to the body of Christ where the project is carried out.

Sunderarag said that the integrity of the church in India "is being circumvented by a multiplicity of parachurch groups with their own programs and North American support links," although he declined to identify any such organization by name. "Since these groups were established without consultation with or winning the confidence of the broader national church in India, they undermine and subvert the true leadership of the Indian church, no matter how well-intentioned their objectives," the report stated.

The Evangelical Fellowship of India, formed in 1951, serves as a model for younger national evangelical organizations in the Third World, the report stated. EFI has strong departments for Christian education, missions, relief and development, revival and evangelism and women's ministries. Its membership includes 25 denominations, some 70 parachurch organizations, and more than 3,000 individual members.

On another subject, Sunderarag asked that North American evangelicals interact with the United States and Canadian governments about the availability of multi-year visas for North Americans to minister in India. He noted that Hindu priests from India are allowed to come to North America for multi-year periods to serve the Indian-American and Indian-Canadian Hindu communities here. He asked that North American Christian leaders press for reciprocity. "Why should not missionaries with specialized expertise — seminary professors and medical doctors, for example — be allowed to come to India? the report asked. "We need you," Sunderarag said.

First Cuban Lutheran pastors ordained

HAVANA, Cuba (EP) — The first three Cuban Lutheran pastors were ordained in a public ceremony November 4. Each of the three pastors will serve a parish, but since the new church has very little money and owns no property, the three will also continue to work at other jobs.

The first official act of the pastors was to set aside as a deacon Samuel Ruiz Avalo, a third-year student at an inter-denominational seminary and the church's secretary.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) began work in Cuba in 1907, but no Cubans were ever ordained. Mission efforts were conducted in English until 1956 and pastoral leadership was provided by missionaries. The LCMS was forced out of Cuba in 1959 with the rise of Fidel Castro. At that point, lay leadership took over the church. According to a news report of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Antonio Abad Alvarez, 63, a street cleaner, who was one of the three ordained in the November ceremony, is credited with keeping much of the church alive during those difficult years.

The government confiscated the three Lutheran church buildings and members were forced to meet in homes or in churches of other denominations. The government still holds the Lutheran buildings. One is used as a film studio and another is used for housing in Havana. The third building, now vacant, is on the Isle of Youth on a large tract of land which also includes a parochial school, parsonage and athletic field. Its return has been promised by the government. The church also hopes for the return of the building used as a film studio in Havana.

'Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to be in Cuba to give the body and blood in the sacrament," said Bishop Rafael Malpica-Pedilla of the Caribbean Synod of the ELCA, who conducted the ordination ceremony. "It was very moving to look out at the people's faces and wonder what they had been [doing] for 30 years."

Caribbean region becomes mission force

KINGSTON, Jamaica (WEF) — The Caribbean Consultation on Global Mission served as the catalyst for a change of mentality for the region. That is the view of the 105 church leaders from the Caribbean basin area that met here in Kingston, Jamaica, in November.

During the consultation's plenary sessions and workshops, they say, they experienced a shift in their collective outlook from considering themselves a mission field to envisioning themselves as a mission force. They stopped viewing themselves in a dependent posture as recipients of mission, and began to think of themselves in an interdependent relationship with other areas as mission senders.

Observers noted that a paper presented by the Rev. Gerry Seale of Barbados was specially practical in analysing the hindrances to cross-cultural missions from the Caribbean and what might be done to overcome them.

Seale concluded: "I believe it is well within our ability to send missionaries across the world. If we can develop effective discipleship and stewardship programs, we will see our people launched out. I am convinced that we have the human and financial resources to make this possible."

The consultation concluded by naming an eight-member task force to lay out plans for organizing a missionary organization to serve the region. It is envisioned that it would begin by stimulating interest and involvement in local churches, and later co-ordinate missions groups and stimulate training programs. It was charged to report back to the commission's officers by the end of the year. The intent is to launch the organization by the time of next year's Congress on the Evangelization of the Caribbean (CONECAR '92), tentatively scheduled for August in the Dominican Republic.

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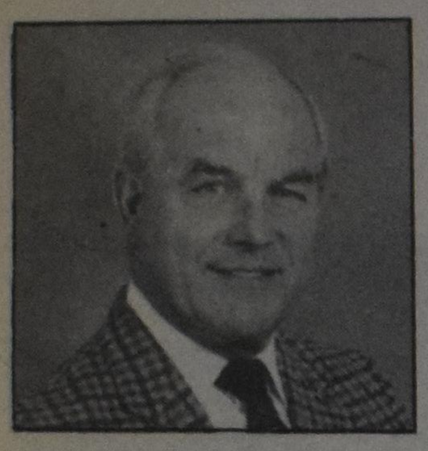

Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Admonition to Parliament Hill

In *Christian Week* of November 6, Dr. John H. Redekop remarks about the spectacle we have seen in Ottawa in recent months. He directs "a modest admonition to God's servants." The "servants," in this case, are all members of the Senate and the House of Commons. They have "a divine mandate," and that mandate does not include "making a mockery of procedure and wasting public funds by irresponsible antics."

One is tempted to say that these supposedly esteemed decision-makers are acting like little boys, but that would be an insult to little boys.

"What does the Bible say? In Romans 13 we read that 'the authorities that exist have been established by God,' that a government official is 'God's servant to do you good,' and again, 'He is God's servant.'

More than a few of God's servants have been misbehaving and we do well if we communicate that fact. Why should we tolerate childish antics, a flagrant disregard for long-established norms, and obstructionism? Don't these otherwise reasonable people know that they make themselves and the country look foolish?"

After having pointed out how and where Conservatives as well as Liberals misbehaved, he concludes his admonition with these words:

"Politicians, it's high time that many of you rethink your priorities, your strategies, your tactics, and your antics. And in your reflective moments remember that you are not only accountable to your electorate but, as his servants, also to God."

Newfoundland not mentioned in Rome

The *Catholic New Times*, still upset about sexual abuse in Newfoundland by members of the clergy, is disappointed that the Canadian delegates to the recent Synod in Rome "chose not to make a major intervention on the issue of sexual abuse by members of the clergy"; this in spite of the fact that the Canadian bishops committee on sexual abuse had recommended a serious consideration of this issue at the synod, following up on the Winter Report concerning the events in Newfoundland. We quote from the November 4 issue:

"Many Catholics throughout this country have suffered profoundly over the incidents of sexual abuse of children by priests and other church workers. The fact that the hardest-to-heal suffering has been borne by children is a terrible fact. Yet the anguish of so many has also, in God's mercy, provided our church with a unique moment of grace. Some of that grace shines out of the astonishing pages of the Winter Report.

"The members of the Winter Commission have dared to say that for our church to be healed of the maladies that bred the abuses of power that they investigated, we must do more than psychological screening and better training of seminarians. We must plan for a revolution in the daily ways of doing things, in the existing structures and assumptions of parishes and dioceses.

"In the final result the Winter Commission and its report were not even mentioned in the synod hall in Rome. More than a few Newfoundlanders have phoned all the way to the office of this newspaper in Toronto in their angry search to know why the sexual abuse issue has been so veiled and sidelined at the synod. 'Respectful rage,' one Newfoundland Catholic calls it: the St. John's Catholics care about their church and will not excuse authorities who ignore their pain.

"The story of this 'intervention that didn't happen' is a classic example of the old ways that no longer foster life in our church. The energy and conviction of the recommendations to the synod delegates by the members of the Committee on Sexual Abuse were dimmed to a faint flicker — with the loss scarcely noticed, let alone mourned, by our bishops. The potential in the Winter Report to call the whole church of Canada to conversion, and to the creation of healthier, more mature relationships in parish and diocesan structures was neutralized and rendered invisible in the interventions on behalf of the Church of Canada to the world Synod in Rome. "To continue to exercise power in the church in ways that exclude or dismiss those who still care deeply enough to want to build anew in these difficult times is to run the risk of squandering this moment of grace that has been offered to us."

Presbyterian statistics

The *Presbyterian Record* of November 1990 published a short article on church growth (excerpts from the 116th General Assembly). In view of the fact that at the time the Presbyterians had set as their goal "to double our membership in the 'eighties," these statistics are revealing and disappointing. They make every church that has joined the "church growth movement" mindful of Ahab's word of Ben-Hadad: 'One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off' (1 Kings 20:11).

"Indications are that the Presbyterian Church slipped into the '90s with a loss of 1,200 members, only 1,000 members more than following union in 1925 and a loss of 47,000 members since membership peaked in 1964 at 202,566.

"Death accounts for 32 per cent of the removals from the roll each year. Twenty-six per cent results from transfer of membership, 11 per cent of these to non-Presbyterian congregations.

"Forty-two per cent of all persons removed occur through a revision of the roll. A 1988 study revealed that of the 58 per cent for whom moving was not a factor, 23 per cent joined another denomination, 48 per cent dropped out of congregational involvement, and for 29 per cent there was no record. Interviews with dropouts from Presbyterian congregations indicate fewer than 10 per cent received a pastoral visit to express care and concern. These figures reflect a failure to assimilate and provide adequate pastoral care for the members.

Once again church growth called on congregations to 'close the back door' if membership decline is to be arrested."

Anglicans on human rights

Will the issue of "sexual orientation" that has brought so much unrest to the United Church now also disturb the peace in the Anglican Church? The Anglicans have been working on a "human rights document" for the last 10 years. Because of a clause on "sexual orientation" the document "has been bounced from committee to committee in an attempt to find a solution agreeable to all sides." The *Anglican Journal* of November 1990 recommends the speedy adoption of the document and comments as follows:

"However, 10 years is long enough. The whole episode has placed the church in an embarrassing position, and has even raised questions about its moral credibility.

"It is time for the human rights principles to be adopted.

"The formulators of the document hope it will serve as a guide in reviewing canon law and acts of synod, in challenging current situations and in planning for the future. They also hope it will stimulate discussion of human rights in all levels of the church.

"The principles bar discrimination on the basis of 'age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic origin, ancestry, disability, or socio-economic status.'

"The main objection to the principles is the inclusion of sexual orientation as a human right, especially as it pertains to ordination. Most of the correspondence received by the human rights unit opposing the principles objects to the inclusion of sexual orientation in the principles.

"Passage of the principles is necessary because they protect people from individual, arbitrary discrimination, whether they are applying for a job at the national office or want to receive the sacraments at the local parish.

"The Anglican Church of Canada has a long history of advocating human rights. It has supported Canada's Native peoples in their fight for justice, and it has worked for just and humane treatment for all peoples in our country.

"Internationally, it has condemned discrimination and spoken out on human rights violations around the world.

"But, actions speak louder than words. The Anglican Church of Canada can make its own clear statement by finally affirming basic human rights for its members and employees."

Jacob Kuntz is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ont.

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'Ride the wind,' Malachi born

Sonya Vanderveen-Feddema

"Oh, no!"

Benjamin felt a warm sticky substance ooze beneath him on the kitchen chair as a rank, putrid smell seeped between the cracks of broken shells. He jumped up and dropped his book, a present for his eighth birthday, on the table.

"Malachi!" Can't you collect your eggs when they're fresh? What kind of farmer are you?" he asked his dishevelled, aging next-door neighbour. Five chickens clucked underneath the table by Malachi's dirty boots as he sat eating his lunch.

Malachi's false teeth and a shower of bread crumbs, sprang from his mouth as a bellyful of laughter erupted. He shoved his teeth back in place and said, "Not as good as I used to be. I was going to collect the rest of the eggs to fry up for supper. But you're wearing supper on your jeans. And it's rotten from the smell of things. You better get a cloth and clean yourself." He tousled Benjamin's unruly black hair.

"Hey, I caught you that time! You said those were your own teeth, growed right into your head."

"And so they are! My natural pride and joy. They just get up now and then to do some walking. And if we're going to make that horse race we better get moving, too. You can read to me from your new book when we get back." Malachi wiped his sticky hands on his khaki pants, then lit his pipe.

"Can't I read just a bit to you now? It's so exciting." Delight brightened Benjamin's oval face. His brown eyes promised a world of adventure between the covers of his book.

"It'll have to wait," Malachi said. He placed his plate and tarnished cutlery on the counter, already full with dishes, it being Saturday, and he only washing them once a week, on Sunday, the day he thought of as clean and holy. In between the dirty dishes was a basket of unopened letters, the protruding corners of the bottom ones yellowing with age, the others on top, whiter yet spotted with drops of grease and littered with crumbs of breakfasts past.

They stepped outside. Malachi's farm yard was an ocean of clutter. A broken stove, a rocking horse, a tangle of chicken wire, a rusty plow floated on the sloping lawn. Several old cars, drowning in undergrowth of previous years, leaned toward the chicken coop, as if begging it for rescue. The chicken coop sagged sadly, its windows blinded by boards, closed-off, alone. Drooping dejectedly, the house and barn bowed to the waves of clutter, as if weighed down by their eroding presence.

"We'll take the Dodge." Malachi put the key into the ignition of the rusty truck and chanted, "You did it once, honey. Do it again."

The engine sputtered, promising to come to life, then coughed a throaty "No."

"Dang thing! Always knew it had a mind of its own." Malachi climbed out of the truck, and gave it a swift kick, punishing the Dodge for not performing. "Ouch," he yelled, remembering his gimpy leg.

"Can't we go?" Benjamin asked. "Will we miss it?"

"No sir. I've waited for this horse race too long. It's not every day that Murphy places a bet against Belford's horse and then invites us to watch them race. What fools they are to run them in the pasture. We'll get there, all right. Don't you worry. The tractor's in the shed. We'll take it."

When they drove into Murphy's farm, the riders were mounting the horses. With a shout, Benjamin jumped off the tractor before it had stopped. Pushing past several neighbouring farmers, he ran to the white fence that stood between the people and the animals. Malachi parked the tractor under the maple tree on Mrs. Murphy's meticulous lawn and joined Benjamin.

"And they're off!" Murphy's voice bit the air with vengeance. He shouted like a competitive child at a leaping frog contest, certain that his chestnut mare was the fastest runner, yet afraid to be proven wrong. Out of breath, he clasped his thick, chapped fingers together in a house of prayer.

Belford leaned against the fence, talking with friends and keeping a keen eye on the progress of his grey gelding.

Drenched in foamy white sweat, the horses galloped around the lumpy pasture time after time. As they passed the fence each time, dirt and clumps of grass jumped about in a frenzied dance, stinging Benjamin's face.

With a stab of pain, Benjamin felt Malachi clutch his shoulder as the two horses passed the fence for the seventh time, then collided. Murphy's chestnut stumbled, then regained its footing. After several strides it halted. Blowing rapidly out of its nose, it began to sweat profusely. Belford's gelding ran on, unhurt.

Dashing to his horse, Murphy yelled over his shoulder. "Malachi Born! Get Malachi!"

Arms reached up to assist Malachi, well-known for his horse sense, as he climbed the fence. He hobbled to the injured animal. With his strong, competent hands, he examined the mare's front leg and discovered what he feared had happened. Beneath the lacerated flesh, the fetlock had shattered and the fore canon was broken in several places.

Malachi avoided Murphy's eyes.

Wrenching his wedding band around his finger, Murphy demanded, "Look at me. How bad is she?"

Malachi stood up and touched Murphy's arm, like a king placing a sceptre on a knight's shoulder, preparing him for a difficult task. "She'll have to be put away."

Murphy took a deep breath.

Malachi's muscular hands, useless to bring healing, hung limply by his side as he walked to the fence. "John," he said to one of the onlookers, "get the shotgun from the house. Benjamin, go to the tractor and wait for me there."

"Malachi! I'm eight years old now. I can watch."

"Never mind. Go. This isn't something your ma would want you to see."

Benjamin stomped to the tractor and, using it as a ladder, climbed into the maple tree. He watched as Malachi handed the gun to Murphy. Murphy handed it directly back, then touched the star on the mare's forehead, a final parting, and walked away.

Malachi aimed the shotgun and fired. The bullet stung with deadly fury. Twitching, the horse slumped in a rag doll heap, finally free. Malachi placed the gun on the ground beside the corpse. He walked to the tractor and, forgetting about Benjamin, returned home.

As Malachi drove into his yard, he saw the rocking horse, chipped and broken, wooden in body, lost in soul. A chicken flew from its back to the ground.

Malachi parked the tractor in the shed and walked to the rocking horse. Tenderly, he picked it up and held it securely against his chest as a father would a new-born child. He remembered Malachi the young, rocking back and forth on this horse, on this land, head thrown back with shouts of glee, searching the sky for elephants flying by in cotton clouds.

For him the sky held many possibilities besides rain, sleet, sun, hail, snow, the phenomena of nature. He had always seen much more. Darting horses and chariots aflame, speeding like lightning to places beyond the next cloud. And in the next cloud, angels played hopscotch, rocked on wooden horses and skipped rope in a perpetual childhood which he had now lost. The idea made him feel young again. He would remember the angelic children when the vision of Murphy's horse, broken beyond healing, kept sleep from shrouding him.

Carefully, Malachi hugged the rocking horse as if it might disappear in the pressure of his grip, like summer into autumn, with no warning. The horse felt small against his aging body, time having again deceived him about the size of childhood belongings. His fingers caressed the curve of the head and the body that had been for him a living horse, not unlike the one he had shot an hour ago.

Along the rocker he discovered indentations carved in the wood. Flipping the rocking horse over he read, "Malachi Born." His name. His words. He owned so few. His fingers trembled over the other meaningless markings beside his name. Pain painted

feature

streaks of sorrow on his face. "At least I can read pictures," he said out loud, excusing himself to an imaginery teacher in a one-room school house.

The boarded-up chicken coop stared out at him, unseeing and unknowing, like a forlorn old grandfather with blinded eyes and a mind imprisoned by murky shadows.

Screech! Murphy's truck lept up the driveway as Benjamin leaned impatiently through the window. "You left me behind!" Benjamin's voice accused Malachi.

"Where were you, my boy? Didn't I tell you to go to the tractor?"

Benjamin grinned. "I was close to the tractor, but not quite on it."

"Just slightly above it." Murphy said.

"Thanks for bringing him here," said Malachi. "and don't tell his ma that I left him behind. She's sure to wonder if I'm fit to care for him while she works."

"It's our secret," Murphy said. And solemnly said, "Thanks." He drove away leaving Benjamin and Malachi, still holding the rocking horse, in a cloud of exhaust fumes from his surging take-off.

Malachi placed the rocking horse awkwardly on the ground.

"What's that?" Benjamin asked.

"Well, what do you think it is?"

"I think it's a rocking horse, but where did you get it?"

"It's mine from when I was little like you. I found it in the attic the other day. I guess my ma put it there years ago. I was going to throw it away. Clean up around here. But maybe I'll change my mind and keep it a little longer."

"That's what you always say."

"I know. I know." Malachi walked up the ramshackle steps to the house. "That's why the place looks like it does. But someday I'll clean up. You wait and see."

They entered the house. Sweeping a chicken from its comfortable perch, Malachi placed the rocking horse on the kitchen table.

"So now you know how to read," he said.

Benjamin was offended. "I've known how to read since Grade 1. I'm in Grade 3 now."

"Do you know big words or just little ones?"

"I know both."

"Flip that rocking horse over. You'll find some words on the rocker. Do you know how to read them?"

Benjamin turned the wooden animal upside down. He read out loud: " 'To Malachi Born. From Ma and Pa. Christmas 1928. Ride the Wind Forever.' " He looked up to see if Malachi approved. "Did I read it right?"

Silently, Malachi pressed his fingers against his eyes. When he opened them his vision was blurry and spotty. "I'll never learn to ride the wind," he said.

"Did I do OK?" Benjamin asked again.

"You did. You did more than OK. It's time to read from your book. Let' sit on the couch. And check for eggs before you sit down. I don't want another good meal ruined."

Benjamin opened the book and began to read.

Joy painted ease on Malachi's face as Benjamin spoke the words, the black gold, into life.

He stopped. "What's this word?"

Malachi took the book, then laughed nervously. "Almost forget. I can't read without my glasses. I lost them the other day."

"I never knew you wore glasses."

"There's lots you don't know about me and I aim to keep it that way." Malachi spoke with uncharacteristic harshness.

Benjamin skipped the word and finished the rest of the chapter. A car horn honked. Putting his book down, he took his coat from the kitchen chair and thanked Malachi for bringing him to the horse race. Then he ran out to his mother.

"Liar!" Malachi accused himself. He stumbled to the table, longing to decipher the words etched into the rocker; words that his pa had thought of but could not possibly have written himself. Someone else must have engraved them for him, he thought.

Benjamin's book lay on the table where he had forgotten it. Malachi opened it and touched the letters, gingerly, as if they were fragile pieces of crystal that could shatter at the touch of his rough farm hand. Words, like black gold, stared at him. Black gold that could make him rich. Rich in his mind; rich in his soul.

His crippling poverty overwhelmed him.

"Chicken scratch," he shouted. His heart burned with rage as he flung the book across the room. He was an old man with pictures in his mind, with eyes to read, with hands to write. But with only a fistful of words to call his own.

Anger painted frenzy on his face. Seizing the book from where it had fallen, he ran as fast as his gimpy leg would allow to the pit in the ground by the chicken coop where he burned the garbage every week. He reached into his pocket for matches, constant companions to his pipe.

Deliberately, Malachi tore out several pages from Benjamin's book and, striking a match, he set them on fire, destroying the words that through lack of knowledge had destroyed him. "Chicken scratch," he shouted again. He yanked out and lit more pages. The flame, hungry like his stifled mind, devoured them with a ferocious appetite. No longer able to withstand his agony, he threw the book into the pit.

He turned away, exhausted.

The accusing glare of the chicken coop overshadowed him as he walked to the house.

"I left my book behind." Benjamin yelled as he biked up the driveway. His voice stung Malachi like a bullet meeting its mark. He sat down at the edge of the porch, limp as a rag doll, trapped.

"What's wrong?" Benjamin said.

"I'll never ride the wind. I'm just an old man."

"Nobody rides the wind. Only birds and airplanes, I guess. Don't feel bad."

"You know how to ride the wind," Malachi said.

"I don't. I tried once to fly from the verandah on a windy day, but it didn't work. I got a goose bump on my head."

"When you read your books, you ride the wind all over the world."

Benjamin looked puzzled. "So then you can ride the wind. You can read."

"No. You're wrong. I'm good at pretending that I can read."

"All grown up people know how to read," Benjamin protested.

Malachi took Benjamin's hand and walked with him to the pit. "Forgive me," he said.

Benjamin scopped up his ravaged book, gloves of soot forming on his fingers. "You mean old man! I thought you were my friend. I'm telling my mom." He beat against Malachi's chest, leaving black childish hand prints on his weathered shirt. Then Benjamin ran to his bike and raced home.

In the house Malachi ripped off his shirt, unable to keep the accusing hand prints so close to his heart. He looked down at his bare chest, encased in loose and wrinkled skin. "Useless old man," he berated himself. A picture of Murphy's worthless dead horse, broken beyond healing, flashed through his mind. He shuddered. And then, as in a chaotic, grotesque dream, it was him lying there in the pasture. Life, beauty and creativity destroyed.

Terrified, he looked out the kitchen window, searching the sky like he had when he was a child. No angels skipping rope or rocking on horses were there to comfort him. Instead, he saw the changing autumn colours, brighter, more varied than the green of summer, ablaze beneath the grip of the afternoon sun.

"I'll do it," he said, as he shivered in his half-nakedness, exposed for who he was. With gentleness, he embraced himself. "Malachi Born, you'll learn to ride the wind," he said out loud. "You'll swallow your dang pride and learn to read." Relief painted a sliver of happiness on his face. His summer was gone, but he would begin to glow, with transformed and varied colours, in the autumn of his life.

Next morning Malachi woke, troubled, from his sleep. The number. He tried desperately to remember it. He sat on the edge of his bed, stretching in his ghost-like long-johns and shivering as the morning's coolness assaulted him. The phone number had to be there, somewhere in his mind. He stretched once more. The action seemed to loosen the numbers, allowing them to tumble into his memory.

He ran to the telephone, barely used except when others phoned him; he dialed the numbers, tentatively, as if afraid his fingers would be devoured by the turning dial. "Yeah, it's Malachi here. Can you tell Benjamin to come over later? It's important."

Malachi ate breakfast and, it being Sunday, washed the dishes. Then he wiped the rocking horse clean with fresh water. In a metal box he found a tattered ribbon and tied it around the horse's neck.

Grabbing the crowbar from a pile of tools on the floor, he went to the chicken coop and began ripping the boards from the windows, freeing them from their fetters of nails. Stale air assailed him. The air of death. Sunlight seemed to hesitate entering so barren a place. A place of cobwebs. Dust. Feathers, once worn proudly, now fluttering, lost, along the earthen floor.

"What are you doing?" a small voice pried its way between the tearing sounds.

"I'm cleaning up around here. I told you that I would someday." Malachi was afraid to look directly at Benjamin, fearful to discover that he had shattered a trust beyond repair. "I want to show you something in the house."

They walked in silence and entered the kitchen.

"It's yours." Malachi handed the rocking horse to Benjamin.

"To keep?"

"Like I said, I'm cleaning up around here. It's just cluttering the place up."

"It's special to you."

"So are you."

Benjamin placed the rocking horse on the floor and flung his leg over it.

"Check for eggs," Malachi warned.

Benjamin laughed. "I'm too big for it already," he said. His legs bent awkwardly as he sat astride the horse. Suddenly he rocked vigorously back and forth. The horse, wooden in body, now no longer lost in soul, seemed to come to life in his grasp.

"That's all right. You'll never be too big to ride the wind, though."

As Malachi laughed in the pleasure of the moment, his false teeth sprang from his mouth.

"Caught you!" Benjamin cheered.

Malachi felt fresh and newly born.

Sonya Vanderveen-Feddema is a freelance writer who lives in St. Catharines, Ont.

The aftermath of the decline of ideology (5)

The glory of Moldavia and the shame of Bucharest

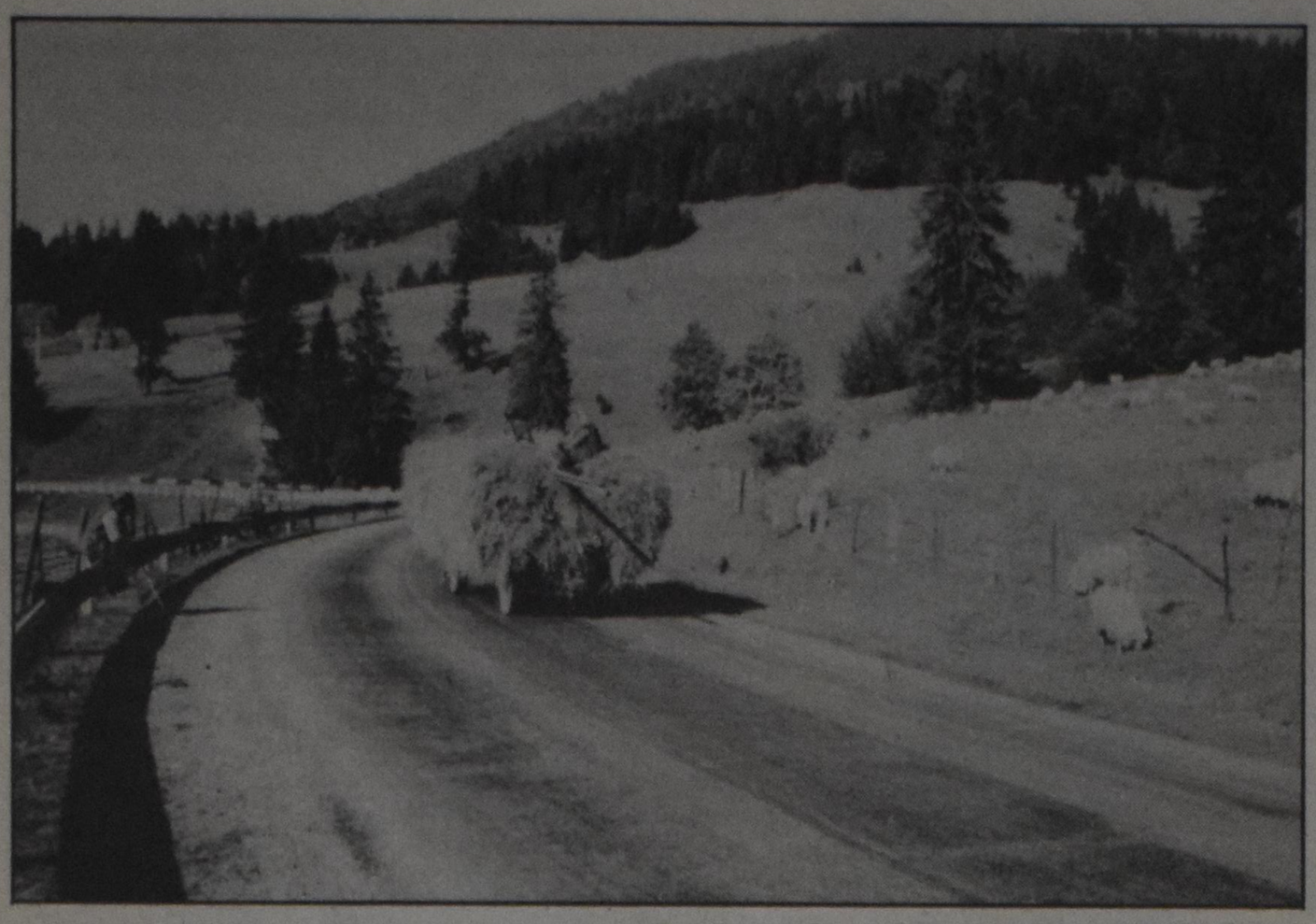

Photo: Bert Witvoet

In the Carpatian mountains a shepherd watches his flock from across the road, while a farmer brings home a load of hay.

Bert Witvoet

In this final instalment of my account of our travels through Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, I will focus on the socio-economic conditions in Romania, after a brief account of our visit to four Greek Orthodox monasteries.

On the way to Suceava, where we were to deliver our load of medical supplies, we traversed the lovely, pristine mountains and villages of northern Moldavia. The Carpatian mountains are not as rugged as those we would later see in Yugoslavia and northern Italy.

Rather, they are rounded mountains with forests and meadows and plenty of little hamlets and towns nestled in valleys or situated on plateaus. We enjoyed seeing so many farmers on the road with their ox- or horse-drawn wagons, so many people out in the fields tending sheep, geese or even a single cow.

There was little evidence here of collective farming, perhaps because the mountainous terrain does not allow for large operations to flourish. We found that many houses were brightly painted and that yards were often enhanced by elaborately crafted well-houses and magnificent fences.

Whatever the economic conditions were, we suspected that small farmers and villagers were a little better off than their fellow Romanians on collective farms and in the cities. Later on I would read in the book *The Shattered Bloc — Behind the Upheaval in Eastern Europe* that, although only 12 per cent of arable land in Romania is cultivated by private farmers, these farmers supply 40 per cent of the vegetables, 60 per cent of the milk and 44 per cent of the meat produced in Romania.

In Transylvania we had seen (and later in eastern Moldavia we would see) the vast land tracts of collective farms. How utterly boring it must be, we speculated, to plow a field that is miles long.

Moldavian treasures

In Suceava we soon found the apartment of the doctor to whom we were to bring the medical supplies. She and her husband and two daughters warmly welcomed us. They insisted that we eat something with them and were disappointed to learn that we could not stay very long. We were firmly committed to spending that night with the parents and extended family of a Romanian refugee friend.

"But you must visit the monastery of Voronet before you go south," said the doctor's husband. "It's the most important and most famous Moldavian monastery and it's only 30 miles back along the route you took to come here." We relented, agreeing that it would be unforgivable that we should miss this important monument.

We reached Voronet just before dusk. St. George's Church was indeed a glorious edifice, built in the late 1400s and painted with frescoes inside and out. The predominant blue in the Voronet murals is apparently world famous. Manufactured by peasants from natural pigments, the secret of its composition has never been discovered. The church's tent-shaped roof with its large overhang had protected a large part of the outside frescoes.

Inside the church the frescoes were less clear, covered as they were with the oily soot from centuries of candlelight and eroded somewhat by trapped humidity. But here it was the wooden benches along the wall, the altar decked with richly decorated cloth, the religious books and the many gold- and silver-covered icons that drew our attention. What struck us, too, was the quiet, dimly lit atmosphere. We did not regret our little detour.

At the beginning of this century, Austrian art historian Josef Strzygowski wrote the following about the Moldavian monasteries: "No other country in the world offers anything similar. The richness of colours fascinates even more when in the interior of the churches the glittering of the gold intervenes, the effect of which attains perfection under the sunrays which filter through the windows." (*La Peinture Murale de la Moldavie*)

A hazardous journey

There were no sunrays left to filter through anything by the time we left Voronet. It was getting dark and we had two hours of driving ahead of us before we reached Piatra Neamt where the Mindru family awaited us. Fortunately, the doctor's husband had promised to notify the Mindrus by telephone of our late arrival.

Driving at night in Romania is hazardous. The main highways are two-lane paved roads with no lights. That in itself would not be so bad were it not for the fact that these roads are occupied by all kinds of vehicles and people without so much as a reflector or neon strip to warn you of their presence. Out of the darkness would suddenly emerge horse-drawn wagons, people walking a cow home, a wedding procession (they, at least, had torches), people walking in groups or alone (usually wearing dark clothing).

We were glad to arrive safely in Piatra Neamt where we were eagerly awaited and warmly received by the Mindrus. We had brought a parcel along from their son (who lived with us in St. Catharines for a while) as well as pictures of the son's recently reunited family. We spent a wonderful time there and visited three more Moldavian monasteries. In the last monastery I asked an old priest if I could take his picture. He agreed. When I went up to him to thank him, he took a hold of me, kissed me and blessed me. He proceeded to do the same with the rest of my companions, last of all with Alice, who was a little apprehensive about this dramatic benediction.

From Piatra Neamt we travelled to Bucharest, the Romanian capital. Here it was Chris Mindru's brother who took us in and showed us around. He showed us the balcony where former president Nicolae Ceaucescu had given his last speech before the crowd suddenly turned against him. He showed us the destruction that a few days of shooting had caused to buildings in the heart of Bucharest. But first we visited the site of the palace that Ceausescu had built for himself.

Gaudy monstrosity

We did not expect to see the inside of the palace; the complex is closed to the public. However, a guard who had asked me for cigarettes

Continued on page 13 ...

FROM COAST TO COAST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Abbotsford-CFVR	7:30 am	850
Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30 am	1230
Osoyoos-CKOO	8:30am	1490
Penticton-CKOK	8:30am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV	10:30 am	1240
Prince George-CIBC	8:30am	94.3
Princeton-CKRP	8:30am	1460
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CKSP	8:30am	1450
Vancouver-CJVB	9:00am	1470
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks-CKBR	8:00 am	1340
Edmonton-CHQT	7:30am	880
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230
St. Albert-CHMG	7:00 am	12.00
Taber-CKTA	8:00am	1570

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton-CFNB	6:30am	550
Newcastle-CFAN	9:00am	790
Saint John-CHSJ	9:00am	700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630

QUEBEC

Montreal-CFQR(fm)	7:30am	92.5

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450

ONTARIO

Ajax-CHOO	9:30am	1390
Atikokan-CFAK	10:30am	1240
Burlington-CING(fm)	7:30pm	107.9
Chatham-CFCO	9:30pm	630
Guelph-CJOY	9:00pm	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Kingston-CFMK	10:00am	96.3
Newmarket-CKAN	8:00am	1480
Oshawa-CKAR	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHRO *(Sat.)*	6:30pm	1350
Pembroke-CHRO	10:00am	1350
Slt. Ste. Marie-CFYN	10:00am	1050
St. Catharines-CKTB	10:00 pm	610
Sarnia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor-CKLW	9:00am	800
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK(fm)	8:00am	102.3

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Romania still a 'dark' country

Photos: Bert Witvoet

The church at the monastery of Neamt, which has frescoes only on the inside.

... continued from page 12.

suggested that by offering cigarettes to a few more soldiers guarding the main gate we might be able to gain access to the building. We followed his suggestion and were able to tour the palace before sunset that day!

It turned out to be a huge, white, neo-Classical monstrosity, with 1,000 rooms, some of which were the size of a football field. Two-thirds of the building is underground, our friend told us.

The thing that first impressed us was the size of the hallways and the huge crystal chandeliers hanging from vaulted ceilings. The marbel used on the first floor had been imported from Carrara, Italy, while Romanian marble had been used on the second floor. While a guide was holding forth with all kinds of outrageous statistics, I snuck a piece of Romanian marble into my coat pocket as a souvenir. Since the palace is still under construction, there were many scraps lying around.

Inside one hall, which, we were told, was 3,000 square meters in size, we were shown the huge carpet that workers had made in the room. It weighed several tons and could never have been transported from the outside.

In the floor, microphones had been planted which would have picked up any whisper or hint of a discussion had the palace ever been used during Ceausescu's days.

On one side of the large hall was a door which led to a small room with a chute that would have taken the Ceausescus to underground chambers and tunnels in case of an emergency. On the other side of the large room a doorway led to a narrow room where secret police would have been stationed with automatic weapons.

Imagine yourself being invited to this hall by the Ceausescus for a performance by the collective farmworkers ballet, and somehow, mysteriously, disappearing halfway through the program because of an unfortunate remark made to your spouse about the president's awful taste.

This 84-year-old Orthodox priest at the Neamt monastery blessed us.

The great Babylon

The most amazing experience was reserved for us when we reached the roof of the palace. From there we could see the three-and-a-half-kilometer-long boulevard lined with white buildings which the dictator had ordered erected during the last years of his life. This is how the book *The Shattered Bloc* describes the operation:

To finance his grandiose plan for transforming the centre of Bucharest at a cost of untold billions, thousands of workmen laboured day and night to tear down scores of historic buildings and to raise in their place an enormous neo-Classical Palace of the Republic, sitting on an artificial hill, which was to house the Communist Party headquarters and the official residence of the Ceausescus. There was also a spectacular new Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism, 3.5 kilometers long and 110 meters wide, bordered by large white structures whose function remained unknown. The nearby Piazza of National Unity was the site for acre upon acre of towering apartment blocks. More than 40 thousand people who used to live in the gutted centre of the Romanian capital were displaced .... This was urban redevelopment on a monstrous scale, the kind of thing that Adolf Hitler had in mind for Berlin before his death in the Fuehrerbunker. Ceausescu lived to see his *dream fulfilled, regardless of cost, a memorial to himself as the master builder of what passed for socialism in Romania.*

Well, we saw the result of his vision. Indeed, the man had left his infamous mark on history and on the Romanian capital. What are the Romanians supposed to do with all this?

Ceausescu's monument: a white monstrosity built at the expense of an impoverished nation.

They can't very well tear it all down. They seem to be stuck with the mindprint of a megalomaniac.

Dark stores, bare shelves

The next day our friend showed us the stores in Bucharest. It was pitiful to see so many empty stores. We entered two butcher shops — one had a small piece of bacon and a jar of pickles for sale; the other, nothing.

The biggest department store had unlit stairways and elevators. The floors were dark and had many empty sections and shelves. Whatever was for sale was of inferior quality or damaged. Nothing, we were told, is ever in constant supply in Romania. People line up for hours for lightbulbs, toilet paper, gasoline. It's very normal to be late for work because of line-ups. Once at work, there may be nothing to do because either there are no parts, or no items to sell. Everybody is employed, but few have meaningful work. And the wages are extremely low.

Life in Romania tends to be tedious and grim. Although there did not seem to be hunger, things do not work and do not get repaired. In many ways, it's worse living in a developed industrialized system that does not work than it is to live in a society that still functions but at a less "developed" level.

Romanians don't trust each other very easily, we were told. There were simply too many collaborators during the Ceausescu years. Pollution was visible and disturbing. We felt bad for a people that had been suppressed for centuries — by the Tartars, Turks, Germans and Russians, and especially by their home-grown dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu.

No end to restrictions

When we left Romania we witnessed an event at the border between Romania and Yugoslavia that re-enforced our sadness. There was a huge line-up there. We did not fall in line because we had been told by officials that tourists are not expected to join line-ups. (It had been a strange feeling a day earlier to pull to the head of a line-up for gas, even though nobody questioned the preferential treatment we received.) Near the border a police officer pointed us to a spot from which we could soon cross the border. It turned out that the border was closed during suppertime.

While we waited, we talked with several Romanian men. They told us that they had been waiting at the border for several days! The Romanian government had apparently passed a law a few days earlier that severely restricted the amount of goods one could take out of the country. One fellow planned to visit Yugoslavia, and he had three shirts with him to change. This was considered excessive. He could not take more than the equivalent of $25 (Cdn.) with him. This was the kind of story that applied to hundreds more of his waiting compatriots. All of them were stranded at the border because they had too many personal possessions with them.

Imagine how we felt when, after the border re-opened, we were allowed to cross without much difficulty, even though we had bought quite a few items in Romania. Initially a young officer was trying to apply the same standards to us as he was applying to his fellow Romanians. But his superior told him to let us go since we were tourists.

We could have tried to offer cigarettes to him, and one guard even asked us for some, but by this time we had lost our desire for special privileges and decided to let the process take its course without the use of bribes. We were simply too dejected about the kind of difficulties Romanian citizens had to endure in their every-day life.

It was especially Romania which had revealed the lie of communism and the utter futility of relying on a false ideology.

May God have mercy on those millions of people in Eastern Europe who will face, many, many years of hardship as they struggle to capture some of the benefits that we in the West have taken for granted for such a long time.

View from the top of the palace: a 3.5 kilometre boulevard surrounded by uniform structures whose purpose remains unknown.

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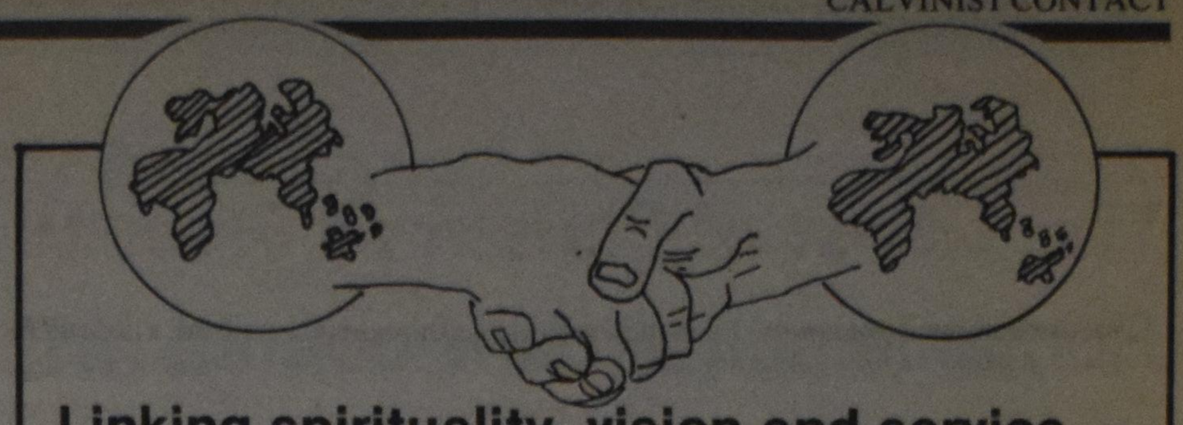


Linking spirituality, vision and service (2)

William C. Veenstra

All of life is religious! That remains a key component of a Reformed world-and-life perspective. Our faith is not to be put on the shelf to be taken off when necessary or convenient. Instead it is to be integrated in all that we do.

But reality demands that we acknowledge the fact that we live in a fragmented world. It has become part of our life to break things down for analysis and possible use at our convenience. We have begun to manipulate these parts, highlighting what we can use and criticizing that with which we feel uncomfortable.

But there is something basically wrong with that view of life. It fails to recognize that the Creator has made us whole and that we cannot simply focus on certain parts and ignore others. There must be in our living an expression of wholeness that reflects the Creator's hand.

This wholeness is best described as spirituality. We are spiritual beings whose spirituality goes beyond what we do in church or in our personal practice of piety. It must be our intent as spiritual beings to express the concern and the delight of God in everything that we do, whenever we do it, and wherever we are doing it — whether that involves shovelling snow, doing the laundry, or preparing for and participating in worship.

But how does this sense of spirituality get expressed in the formal Sunday worship that we do bring to God? That question needs consideration for we are being challenged by all manner of fragmenting forces around us. If we do not have a clear focus ourselves, we will be buffeted and eventually swamped.

Need the 'whole counsel of God'

Take the role of Scripture: preaching the Word holds a central role in worship. Spirituality which touches all of life needs to hear from the whole counsel of God. To limit ourselves to populist themes, to evangelistic texts, or to certain ecclesiastical issues or concerns does not develop wholeness in spirituality. Linkage needs to occur between the whole biblical revelation and the whole of our life's experience.

That also highlights the role of the worshipper. The Reformation recovered the "priesthood of all believers." We need no other to stand between ourselves and God. In addition, we highlight the truth that God gives to each one of us at least one gift by his Spirit.

This giftedness equips us not only for service, but also for worship. If all of life is religious then in our worship we ought to manifest the gifts we have received for other life experiences.

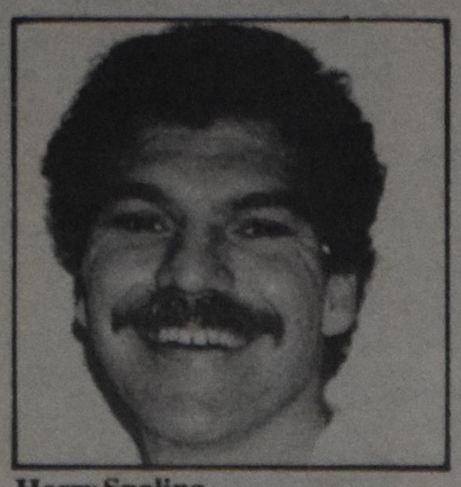
Worship is not something to be done or led by professionals. Worship is the expression of the life that lives within all of us by the grace of God. Sure, it will be awkward at times. But what is a family for? Is it not the place where we learn to walk, run, talk and cry within the security of those who love us and will help us? With the desire to be more mature worshippers, we need to be able to learn from the forces around us, refine them, take what is positive and discard the chaff.

Truly spiritual worship is a worship that reflects that we profoundly care for each other. God wants to touch us and encourage us. He does that through many means, whether that be by a story, a prayer, a declaration of sorrow, or something else. If we worship with real people who do not seek to manipulate but who seek to be salt and light in the world, worship will never be boring. It will have all the excitement and urgency, as well as the profound silence, that comes when we realize that we together are a people belonging to God.

Finally our spirituality in worship needs to be linked to our understanding of the sacraments. They are not simply there to be used, but they are tools of God by which he communicates, in fresh detail, the reality of our being in Christ. As such they are vital to a spirituality that expresses every day that this world belongs to God. We must not let them become mere rites, but we must let them be what they were intended: vivid expressions of God's grace.

It is easy to fall into patterns. Patterns are nice because they allow for very little disruption and confusion, and as a result worship focuses on being orderly. But is that where the focus belongs? No! The focus belongs on God who has expressed an interest in developing a vibrant relationship with his people. When our worship focus is where it belongs, we, God's people, will integrate into everything we do the reality that our God is with us always.

William Veenstra is pastor of Clarkson Christian Reformed Church, Mississauga, Ont.



Harry Spaling

Our place and task in the environment

Environmental impact assessment

"Environmental impact assessment" is a process for identifying and evaluating the effects of a proposed project on the environment. The assessment is carried out before construction begins so that necessary changes to the project design or other environmental protection measures can be undertaken.

Following the environmental movement of the 1960s, Canada adopted a set of federal guidelines in 1974 called the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP); EARP screens the environmental impacts of government sponsored projects. For example: the oil exploration in the Arctic, twinning of the CN rail lines through the Rockies near Banff, and building of Terminal 3 at Toronto's airport were all subjected to an environmental review under these guidelines. All the provinces have also adopted some type of environmental assessment legislation or policies.

Most recently, the Rafferty-Alameda dam project in Saskatchewan has brought the environmental, economic and political stakes involved in environmental assessment into the forefront. The $150 billion plan to build two dams, one on the Souris River and one on a tributary, is for flood control and irrigation. Opponents of the dams are concerned about damage to wildlife habitats.

Ongoing conflict

In December 1989 a federal court ordered a full-scale environmental assessment of the project. Ever since, the dams have been embroiled in a bitter federal-provincial controversy. Environment Canada is responsible for ensuring that an environmental assessment is carried out before construction begins. The Saskatchewan government meanwhile wants construction to begin immediately. The controversy has seen compensation agreements of $1 million a month, the start of construction followed by court injunctions to halt it, conflicting reports of ministerial decisions, the resignation of the panel assigned to conduct the environmental review, and legal suits between the federal and provincial governments.

The Rafferty-Alameda case is important for several reasons. Political watchdogs see it as a test of the new federal Environment Minister, Robert de Cotret. Environmental groups see it as a test of the environmental commitments of both provincial and federal governments. Public activist groups see it as a forerunner to the types of legal options open to them in pursuing their self-assigned roles as environmental guardians.

Where will it end?

The case is also precedent-setting for other much larger, and potentially more environmentally damaging, mega-projects proposed across Canada. These include a $1.3 billion pulp mill in Alberta, a $3.6 billion Manitoba Hydro project on the Nelson River with a $1.9 billion transmission line to Ontario, a multi-billion dollar expansion of the James Bay hydro-electric project, and a $5.2 billion Hibernia oil and gas project off the East Coast.

In June 1990 the Canadian government introduced legislation (Bill C-78) to enact a federal environmental assessment process. This bill will legislate what was for 16 years a set of weak and largely voluntary guidelines under EARP. The new legislation will require all projects to be issued a certificate before they can proceed. It will also require follow-up procedures to monitor environmental protection during project construction and operation. The legislation will also apply to trans-boundary matters such as intercontinental air pollution and environmental review of Canadian-supported development projects overseas.

Critics claim that the new legislation does not go far enough. They want to see an environmental auditor appointed to monitor and publicly report on the government's environmental record.

An overhaul of Canada's environmental assessment process is long overdue. Although not without weaknesses, the recently introduced federal legislation will finally give legal clout to an important tool for managing the environment. This legal clout will ensure that the environment receives a high priority when human goodwill and the marketplace fail.

Harry Spaling is a doctoral student in geography at Guelph University, Guelph, Ont.

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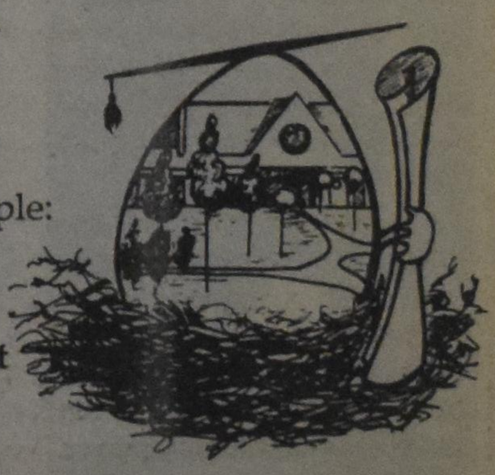

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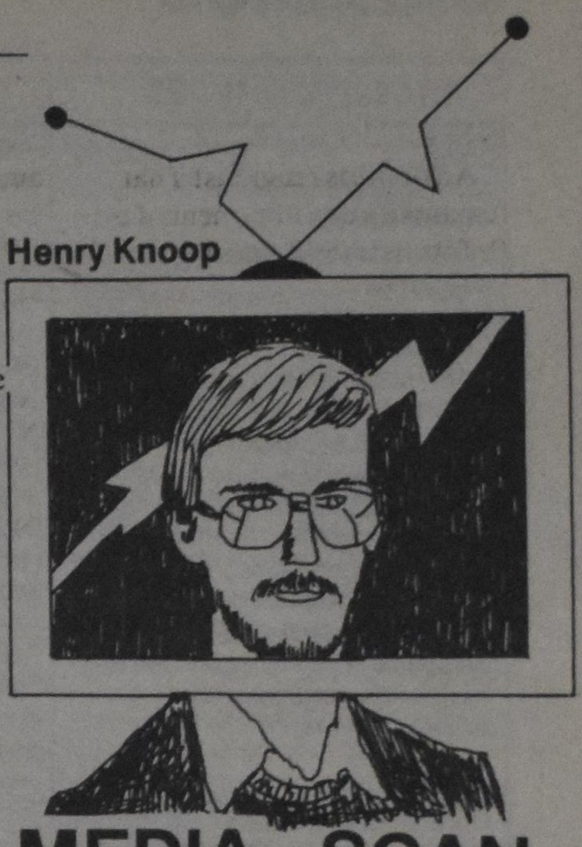
The 'Ghost of Christmas Present'



No, this column is not about Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol,* but it *is* about Christmas. More specifically, it's about two movies which have been around for awhile now, two movies which have proven to be quite popular. What does Christmas have to do with them?

In my area the movie *Ghost* is still playing at a local theatre. If I remember correctly, it came out last summer. Obviously it is doing quite well; much better, in fact, than critics thought it would.

One review I read when the film first appeared said it was a movie that didn't know what it wanted to be: an adventure, a romance, a thriller, a comedy or a supernatural fantasy. The critic didn't think it would work. It has all of the above features wrapped together in one story.

But why not? After all, isn't that why people go to movies? *Ghost* just happens to package it all a little differently. It has certainly struck the right chord with its audience. Essentially, it tries to give the audience what it had been looking for.

Life after death

What is it about *Ghost* that makes a "hokey" story such a crowd pleaser? Why is it still playing months after its release?

I think it's the supernatural premise of the movie: that someone who dies can still be around, that there's a whole other dimension to life than "reality." In our modern technological society, science can tell us all it wants about the real world, but deep down inside of people there is still that yearning to believe in at least the possibility of a spirit world, spiritual communication, life after death, a real heaven and a real hell. Reality can be pretty depressing, especially when a death is involved. What better comfort can one have than to focus on the possibility of life after death?

As biblically warped as the views of the movie might be on these matters, it does attest to a real spiritual hunger on the part of audiences. When our material world begins to break down we're ready to turn to and examine another dimension of our lives.

Of course, not everyone is ready to give up so quickly on the material world. After all, there is always the possibility of winning a lottery, or marrying a millionaire. Such material fantasies are alive and well in our culture. Look at *Pretty Woman,* the movie which is doing just as well as *Ghost*. Although it is no longer playing locally in theatres, a video release was already available in stores by the end of November and has been selling well.

Unlike *Ghost, Pretty Woman* met a less negative critical reception. After all, here was a movie that definitely knew what it wanted to be: a light, romantic fantasy, with a healthy dose of materialistic escapism. Who wouldn't like a shopping spree with an unlimited credit limit?

If the supernatural remains a mystery, at least the material world is clear. Cinderella comes to Hollywood and not only wins Prince Charming, but his credit cards as well. Poor girl, if only she would recognize she's left one kind of prostitution for another.

Much more than a pseudo-ghost

What do these two movies have to do with Christmas?

Their popularity attests to an audience searching for solutions to life's problems. Some are indeed looking more seriously to the supernatural, while others are still firmly rooted to their material world. The Good News we have to share this Christmas meets the needs of both types of viewers.

Christ came down to earth to ease the spiritual hunger of all those who desire something more than a material reality. There's no pseudo-ghost protector here. He's the real thing. And only he can truly turn our mourning into dancing.

Christ also came down to earth to reveal to those who were burdened with material problems with real love and wealth is all about. There's no fantasy escapism here. His promises are real and reliable.

Have a blessed Christmas.

Henry Knoop teaches English at Ajax High School in Ajax, Ont., He lives in Bowmanville, Ont.

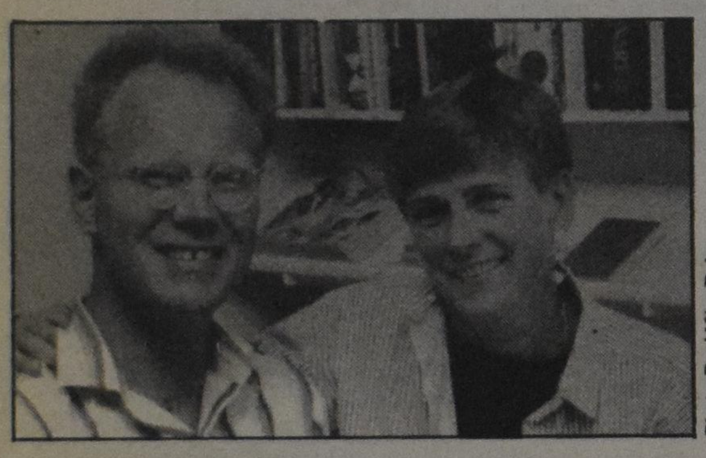


Photo: David Van Dyke

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

What is total depravity? I'll tell you. It's when men and women perform sex acts in front of an audience or pose nude in magazines; when mothers allow their small children to be photographed for kiddie porn or fathers sexually abuse their children; when married couples exchange partners for the purpose of sex.

Who is totally depraved? I am. I have struggled with sexual sin for 35 years. Masturbation and an overdose of foreplay were my downfall. I started masturbating when I was 16 and kept it up all my adult life. When this sin became full-grown I was cut off from God. And when God takes his Spirit out of you, you don't want to live anymore. Then you start looking for a way to end your life.

I have made a suicide attempt and have spent some weeks in a mental institution. The last few years have brought healing in as far as healing is possible.

I believe that I will be spending eternity in hell fire. The road I have to walk is a very lonely road because no one understands me, not even my own husband. I still want to end my life. Almost every day I have to fight the thought of suicide.

Maybe this letter will bring someone to repentance before it's too late.

Dear Lonely Road:

The doctrine of total depravity intends to teach that all of us fall short of the glory of God in every part of our lives. It highlights the marvel of God's grace which covers a multitude of sins and accepts us despite our failures.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* devotes three Lord's Days to our sin and misery and 49 Lord's Days to Christ's salvation and our lives of thankful service. Unfortunately, despite this ratio, too many "Reformed" sermons from too many pulpits have majored in sin and minored in grace so that someone like you, struggling with sexuality, comes to see herself as so depraved that she is forever cut off from God.

The only thing that can keep us from God is sin which we refuse to confess. Your letter demonstrates your sincere struggle with sin and is itself a confession. That shows beyond a doubt that you are a child of God. The Holy Spirit has moved you to cry out for understanding and acceptance. You don't have a hardened heart: you write out of concern for someone else's spiritual well-being while your own pain is so great. You only need to take hold of Christ's love and forgiveness and believe that he died for *you* also.

Our sexuality can be confusing. What is normal and what is abnormal? All of us share your revulsion of the sexual perversions which you list in your opening paragraph. Masturbation and foreplay, however, are separate issues since the one is a normal method of sexual release especially available to singles and the other is a wonderful part of marital love-making. It saddens us to think that these healthy expressions of sexuality were distorted in your life and became addictive.

We hope that you can find the understanding and affirmation that you need. We urge you to seek Christian counselling so that you can continue the healing process.

Make this your daily prayer:
Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.
(Ps. 51:10-12)

Whose sin is totally covered? Yours is! Who may look forward to a new relationship with Jesus? You may! His healing grace is sufficient for you.

Please write us in the future. We're worried about you and are praying for you.

Dear Readers:

This is the time of year that highlights our blessings or our misfortunes, our sense of community or our loneliness. Give some thought to those who find the Christmas season very difficult. Consider who may need a visit, invitation, or a gesture of goodwill. Then do something to give someone a sense of belonging and the experience of being loved, just as Jesus drew you into fellowship with him.

We wish you a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year.

Write to:
Dear P & M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til.

21/12/90

Pioneer Clubs

Provides your church with a quality Bible-based program for boys and girls from kindergarten to high school.

A fun club where children and youth learn how to put Christ in every phase of life.
Assists your church outreach.

Ask for our "FREE BROCHURE"

PIONEER CLUBS
Box 447, Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y3 (416) 681 2883

CCS
CHRISTIAN
COUNSELLING SERVICES
Suite 1901, 20 Eglinton Ave. W.
Toronto, ON M4R 1K8
(416) 489-3350

Marriage & family counselling
Individual & group therapy
Vocational assessments
Seminars & workshops
Conflict mediation to business
Accredited AAMFT supervision for marriage and family therapists
CAPE supervision

THERAPISTS:
William Cooke
John Geeza
Francis Martin
Don Moncrieff
Bruce Twining
Mary VanderVennen
Ken Van Wyk
Rod Wilson

Classified

Classified rates

Births	$30.00
Marriages & Engagements	$35.00
Anniversaries	$40.00
2-column anniversaries	**$80.00**
Obituaries	$40.00
Notes of thanks	$30.00
Birthdays	$30.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $12.50 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $20.00. Letter under file number, $30.00 extra. Photos: $20.00 additional charge. (Free when published with anniversary announcement celebrating 50 years or more.)

Calvinist Contact will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

OBITUARIES

Obituaries should be composed as they are to appear in *Calvinist Contact*. A sheet with information sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

Classified rates

LONGER CLASSIFIEDS: The rate shown above for classifieds ads covers any length up to six column inches. *Calvinist Contact* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $12.50 per column inch.

PHOTOS: Photographs sent by fax are *not acceptable*. If you wish a photo included, send us the original!

NEWLYWEDS

Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in *Calvinist Contact* will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only $15.00! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose $15.00 and the couple's future address.

Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd.
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone (416) 682-8311
Fax (416) 682-8313

Christmas Greetings

PASMA:
We wish all our relatives and friends God's blessings at Christmas and in the New Year.
George and Alice Pasma, 263 Clark Rd., London, ON N5W 5E7

UYL:
To all our family and friends we wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Freda Uyl and Andy
Sikko Bosman — Clinton, Ont.

VANDERWIER:
We wish our children, family and friends a blessed Christmas and New Year.
Uitze and Hilda Vanderwier, 139 Rock St., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

VEENSTRA:
Wij wensen familie, vrienden en bekenden gezellige Kerstdagen en een gezegend 1991.
Pieter and Florence Veenstra, 2 White St., Apt. 105, St. Catharines, ON L2N 1Z2

Thanks

OPTHOF:
We would like to thank our children, grandchildren and friends who made the celebration of our 40th wedding anniversary such a wonderful day for us.
"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised."
John and Deborah Opthof, 254 Ridge Rd., E., Grimsby, ON L3M 4E7

TUININGA:
We wish to thank all who remembered us with cards and letters of condolence with the sudden tragic death of a grandson and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Samplonius. We also thank all those who sent us cards and letters of congratulations with our 50th wedding anniversary. We very deeply appreciate your kind remembrance of us in both our joys and sorrows.
Rev. and Mrs. Cecil Tuininga

Births

BRON:
We, Allen and Brenda, have once again been richly blessed by our Lord with the birth of another baby.

ALAINA JAN

was born on Nov. 20, 1990, weighing 8 lbs. 14½ oz. She is a happily welcomed sister for Eric, Jeffrey and Kyle.
Proud grandparents for the fifth time are John and Gerry Van Zeumeren of Truro, N.S.; and for the eighth time, John and Winnie Bron of Mt. Brydges, Ont.
Home address: R.R.#1, Winsloe, PEI C0A 2H0

COUPERUS (nee DeVries):
"Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; they are his reward" (Ps. 127:3).
It is with joy and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, the Creator of life, that Sid and Sue announce the birth of their son,

NATHANAEL PETER

born on Oct. 25, 1990, weighing 7 lbs. 3 oz. Nathan is a little brother for Shena; the ninth grandchild for Egbert and Jean Couperus of Belleville, Ont., and the 12th grandchild for Henry and Marjorie DeVries of Pine Bush, N.Y.
Home address: 19 Heather Ave., Guelph, ON N1G 1P2

EYK (nee Koornneef):
Thankful to the Lord, we announce the birth of a granddaughter,

HEATHER MARIE

was born on Oct. 11, 1990, first child for Ron and Caroline Eyk, 1 Woodeden Rd., Grimsby, ON L3M 4L8.
The grateful grandparents are Arie and Carla Koornneef and Ralph and Lottie Eyk, all of Beamsville, Ont.

Birthday

SCHREIBER:
With joy and thanksgiving to God, we wish to congratulate our father, grandfather and great-grandfather,

JOHN SCHREIBER

on his 90th birthday, Jan. 5, 1991.
From your grateful family:
Gordon & Nelly Schreiber
Joyce, Robert, Andrew
Pete & Alice Schreiber
Judith & Garry (Patrick, Ryan, Shawn), John & Joanne (Gregory, Scott, Cody), Sandra & Ross, Theodore
Bertus & Alice Schreiber
Sylvia & Tymen (Kyle, Vykki), Martha, John, Derek & Jane
Riemke & Dennis Hancock
Tim, Tanya & Kevin (boyfriend)
Open house Saturday, Jan. 5, 1991, from 2 to 4 p.m., in Trinity Towers, Brampton, Ont.
Home address: Apt. 116, Trinity Towers, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Marriages

DEJONG-STAFFORD:
With joy and thanksgiving to God, John and Gertrude De Jong and Don and Joan Stafford announce the forthcoming marriage of their children,

SHARON JOY
and
STEVEN GRANT.

The wedding will take place on Dec. 22, 1990, in Smithville, Ont.
Future address: Steve and Sharon Stafford, 42-2808 Keele St., Downsview, ON M2M 2G5

What every tenant and landlord should know about Ontario's rent control plans.

The Ontario government plans to replace the current rent review system with rent control.

There will be full public consultation on this new system of rent control with tenants, landlords, municipalities and interested groups and individuals throughout Ontario.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Housing has introduced legislation which will limit rent increases while the government develops a new system of rent control.

This is a temporary measure. It will limit most rent increases to the guideline of 4.6% for 1990 and 5.4% for 1991. It will apply from October 1, 1990.

The changes are not yet law in Ontario and further information will be publicized as it becomes available.

If you have any questions regarding the Ministry's new rent control plans, please call toll-free 1-800-461-6767 or contact your local Rent Review Office listed below.

Ministry of Housing
Ontario

Rent Review Offices:

Barrie (705) 737-2111
Toll-free: 1-800-461-2882
Hamilton (416) 528-8701
Toll-free: 1-800-668-9565
Kingston (613) 548-6770
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Kitchener (519) 579-5790
Toll-free: 1-800-265-8926
London (519) 679-7270
Toll-free: 1-800-265-0937
North Bay (705) 476-1231
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Oshawa (416) 723-8135
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Ottawa (613) 230-5114
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Owen Sound (519) 376-3202
Toll-free: 1-800-265-3737
Peterborough (705) 743-9511
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
St. Catharines (416) 684-6562
Toll-free: 1-800-263-4937
Sudbury (705) 675-4373
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Thunder Bay (807) 475-1595
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Timmins (705) 264-9555
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
Windsor (519) 253-3532
Toll-free: 1-800-265-6924
Metropolitan Toronto
Cities of Etobicoke and York
(416) 236-2681
City of North York and York Region
(416) 250-1261
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000
City of Toronto and Borough of East York
(416) 326-9800
City of Scarborough
(416) 438-3452
Peel Region (416) 270-3280
Toll-free: Ask operator for Zenith 9-6000

Ring in the Season

Classified

Marriage

WEBB-WITVOET:
We,

LAURA ANN WEBB,

daughter of Carol and Dyson Webb, and

ERIC MARCEL WITVOET,

son of Lowell and Nel Witvoet, declare our love for each other and announce that we will be married on Saturday, Dec. 29, 1990, at 3 p.m. in St. James the Apostle Anglican Church, Brampton, Ont.
Future address: 182 Church St., E., Apt. 608, Brampton, ON L6V 1H2

Anniversaries

1965 December 18 1990

WALTER and GAIL DE VRIES
(nee Howell)

With joy and gratitude to our heavenly Father, we are pleased to announce the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you in your future years together as he has done so richly in the past.
Gary & Heidi Vander Meulen — Port Perry
Jennifer, Robyn & Marcus
Michael & Amy Fisher — Waterloo
Mailing address: 143 King St., W., Bowmanville, ON L1C 1R6

1930 December 23 1990

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).
With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord, we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grand- and great-grandparents,

JACOB and JANTJE HORINGA
(nee Scheerhoorn)

May the Lord be near you and bless you to the end of days.
This is the prayer from your thankful children:
Wiebe & Sally Horinga — Woodstock, Ont.
Hank & Betty Horinga — Woodstock, Ont.
Geert & Jitske Horinga — Port Colborne, Ont.
Jeanette & Fred Scheltema — Beachville, Ont.
Grace & Henry Kikkert — Chilliwack, B.C.
Bill & Marge Horinga — Woodstock, Ont.
37 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.
We invite family and friends to an open house at the Maranatha CRC, the Lord willing, on Dec. 22, 1990, from 2-4 p.m.
Home address: 427 Huron St., Woodstock, ON N4S 7A9

1950 December 15 1990

With thanks to God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

JAN and CATHERINE NOORDHOF

Congratulations Mom and Dad, you are to be commended on a job well done in raising us, and of showing your love and support to all of us and our families.
We love you!
Arend & Angeline Noordhof
Kathryn, Tracy, Amanda, Barbie
Henry & Diane Noordhof
Janice, Jason, Krista
Tony & Tracy Noordhof
Michael, Lisa
Ann & Gee Depont
Michael, Shane, Mark
Emmy & Aart Pol
Anita, Andrea, Julie, Nathan
John Noordhof Jr.
Home address: 307 Metcalfe St., Strathroy, ON N7G 1R1

Anniversaries

Broek op Langedijk Hamilton
1960 December 25 1990

Immanuel — God with us.
We praise and thank the Lord for the 30 years of marriage that he has given our parents and grandparents,

CORNELIS and BERTA VANDER STELT
(nee Dekker)

We pray that our Father will continue to bless you as he has in the past.
Congratulations, Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma!
John & Eleanor Tamming — Toronto, Ont.
Katie Beth
Ruth — Quebec, Que.
Jan & Sue — Hamilton, Ont.
Home address: 77 Springside Dr., Hamilton, ON L9B 1M5

Obituaries

On Dec. 6, 1990, the Lord called to his eternal home our dearly beloved wife, mother and grandmother,

MARCHIENA AMSINGA
(nee Feddes)

at the age of 81 years.
Lovingly remembered by her husband Klaas Amsinga and her children:
Eltjo Amsinga — Ingersoll
Henry & Greta Amsinga — Thamesford
Agatha & Leen Vandeban — Seaforth
John & Martha Amsinga — Brantford
Loving "oma" of 16 grandchildren.
Funeral service was held Dec. 8, 1990, at the Westmount Chr. Ref. Church of Strathroy with the Rev. J. Top of Mt. Brydges CRC officiating.
Correspondence address: 400 Dominion St., Apt. 17, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8

"The Lord will reign forever, thy God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!" (Ps. 146:10).
On Sunday, Dec. 2, 1990, it pleased the Lord to take home his child, our father and grandfather,

ADRIAAN CORNELIS DEN BROEDER

at the age of 85.
Father and grandfather of:
Betty Den Broeder — Willowdale, Ont.
Joop & Aafke Den Broeder — Willowdale, Ont.
Ross, Angus
Hank & Wilma Den Broeder — Willowdale, Ont.
Elisabeth & Jarrod, Adrian
The funeral took place in Toronto on Dec. 5, 1990. The Rev. G. Nederveen officiating.
Correspondence address: J.M. Den Broeder, 7 Lurgan Dr., Willowdale, ON M2N 2G1

Ruinerwold, the Neth. Fenwick, Ont.
Oct. 19, 1919 Nov. 26, 1990

The Lord in his mercy has taken home unto himself our dear husband, father and opa,

WALTER DONKER

at the age of 71 years.
Married for 41 years to Ginny Donker (nee Hoogezand).
Dear father of:
Arie & Gaye Donker — Fenwick, Ont.
John & Barbara Donker — Fenwick, Ont.
Martin Donker — Toronto, Ont.
seven grandchildren
"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life" (Rom. 6:22).
Home address: 858 Canboro Rd., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0

Obituaries

De Here nam van ons, om bij Hem in heerlijkheid te zijn, ons medelid,

WALTER DONKER

Wij betuigen onze innige deelname met Mrs. Ginny Donker, kinderen en familie.
We bidden dat de Here hen mag troosten en sterken, door al de beloften die hij ons gegeven heeft in Zijn Woord.
De "Golden Age Club," Fenwick en Wellandport

Mother:

DOROTHY (Dieuwke) HOGETERP
(nee Elzinga)

July 16, 1912 - Nov. 11, 1990, of a heart attack.
And father:

CORNELIS MEINDERT HOGETERP

May 6, 1908 - Nov. 26, 1990, of cancer.
The funerals, as services of praise and thanksgiving, were held exactly two weeks apart at the Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis, Ont., with Rev. John Postuma of York CRC officiating. They were members of the Hagersville Community CRC.
"Our only comfort in living and dying is that we belong to our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Lord's Day 1).
Fondly remembered and forever loved by their children:
Tina & Leo Miedema — Jarvis
Rose & Andy Poortinga — Woodstock
Winnie & Jack deBoer — Hagersville
Hazel & Peter Jansen — Hagersville
Lillian & Johan Veenstra — Ottawa
Rev. Peter & Marianna — London
Shirley & Herb Scholten — Drayton
as well as 35 grandchildren and 42 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by one son, John (1969), one grandchild and two great-grandchildren.
Also loved and remembered by their brothers and sisters:
Elzinga: one brother and two sisters predeceased; one sister surviving, Pat and Andy Hogeveen (Townsend).
Hogeterp: Three brothers predeceased.
Survived by: John & Pat (Townsend), Hazel deBock (Cambridge), Peter & Lucy (Hagersville), Susan (Townsend), Ralph & Riem (Cayuga)

Scheveningen, the Neth. Brampton, Ont.
Jan. 13, 1911 Dec. 4, 1990

"My flesh and my heart may fail but God is the strength of my heart and portion forever" (Ps. 73:26).
On Dec. 4, 1990, the Lord took unto himself, very suddenly for us, but at his appointed time, our dear mother, grand- and great-grandmother,

JACOBA JOL
(nee van der Zwan)

Widow of Willem Jol since Sept. 6, 1959.
Dear mother of:
Riet & Gerrit Van Brenk — Rexdale, Ont.
Ginny & Harry Van Hemert — Schomberg, Ont.
Bill Jol — Brantford, Ont.
Dear Oma of seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.
She is also survived by one sister and two brothers residing in the Netherlands.
A memorial service was held on Saturday, Dec. 8, 1990, in the Heritage Hall of Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont., Rev. P. VanEgmond officiating.
Correspondence address: R. Van Brenk, 84 Hadrian Dr., Rexdale, ON M9W 1V4

Obituaries

Hereby we acknowledge the passing into Glory of our beloved member,

FENNY RIEDSTRA

at the age of 77 years.
May the Lord comfort her husband and family.
On behalf of the Dutch Ladies Society "Tot Arbeid Geroepen," Chatham, Ont.
Secretary: Mrs. J. Dreise

Personal

The Consulate-General would like to come in contact with the following individuals:
HERMANS, J.H.M. born April 25, 1937, last city of residence Amsterdam, immigrated to Canada on June 24, 1969.
KOOPAL, Tjisse, born Aug. 13, 1923, immigrated to Canada on Dec. 19, 1955.
PETERS, Reiner, born at Rotterdam on Oct. 18, 1922, immigrated to Canada on Oct. 14, 1954, last known destination: Smithers.
SCHRIJVERSHOF, Nicolaas, born July 6, 1926, immigrated to Canada on Aug. 17, 1954.
TIJMAN-LIPPENS, Apolinia, born at Teurneuzen on March 19, 1925, immigrated to Canada on Aug. 24, 1957, last known destination: Edmonton.
VERVOORT, Johanna Maria, born at Schiedam on Dec. 23, 1929, immigrated to Canada on April 25, 1956.
WERNER, Neeltje Johanna, born Nov. 18, 1951, immigrated to Canada at the end of 1989.
VAN BEEST, Cornelis Adrianus, born April 24, 1926, immigrated to Canada on Feb. 25, 1961.
BERGMAN-OETELAAR, Barbara G.M., born July 31, 1925, immigrated to Canada, possible destination Calgary.
BERGSMA, Atze, born Oct. 30, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 20, 1963.
BOER, Christiaan, born Aug. 26, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 18, 1957.
CLAASSEN, Martin Peter, born Feb. 10, 1927, immigrated to Canada on Aug. 10, 1959.
VAN DIJK-VAN MUIJEN, Maria Jacoba, born April 25, 1927, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 6, 1988, possible destination: Langley, B.C.
FISELIER, Gerhardus, born May 23, 1931, immigrated to Canada on July 9, 1957.
VAN DE GENDER, Johanna Franciska Margaretha, born Sept. 26, 1925, immigrated to Canada on April 29, 1955, possible destination: Williamsiake
GERBRACHT, Robertus, born Sept. 19, 1927, immigrated to Canada on May 9, 1956.
VAN DER GRAFT, Michael Theodorus Marie, born Sept. 26, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 7, 1957.
GRAS, Remmechina Elsiena, born Nov. 15, 1931, immigrated to Canada on Aug. 15, 1958.
GRIFFIOEN, Rijk, born Oct. 16, 1927, immigrated to Canada on March 13, 1964.
GROEN-KLOOSTRA, Ellen, born June 17, 1934.
VAN DER HEIDE-SCHROTER, Dora, born March 14, 1926, immigrated to Canada on July 27, 1959.
HEIKOOP, Samuel, born April 9, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 18, 1964.
HUS, Jacoba, born Dec. 31, 1926, immigrated to Canada on Jan. 13, 1950.
HUTTEN, Hendrik, born Dec. 27, 1927, immigrated to Canada on April 13, 1960.
DE JONGE, Jacobus, born June 21, 1926, immigrated to Canada on March 31, 1983, possible destination: Otterville.
KREUK, Klaas, born Nov. 9, 1927, immigrated to Canada on May 6, 1957.
LAGERWAARD, Johannes, born June 3, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 31, 1957, possible destination: Calgary.
DE LEUR, Franciscus Josephus, born Sept. 14, 1927, immigrated to Canada on July 9, 1959.
LEWANSKI, Jan, born May 21, 1926, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 20, 1957, possible destination: Winnipeg.
VAN LOO, Cornelis, born June 10, 1926, immigrated to Canada on March 30, 1960.
NIEUWENHUIS, Berthus Cornelis, born April 21, 1927, immigrated to Canada on April 9, 1955.
PAPENHUIJZEN-VAN HOUTEN, Joanna Suzanna Alfons, born June 17, 1926

Personal

VAN ROOMEN, Peter Johannes, born June 21, 1926, immigrated to Canada on April 10, 1959.
SAGEL, Reint, born May 28, 1925, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 16, 1957.
SCHOLTENS, Hendrik, born April 16, 1928.
STEGEMAN, Maria Catharina, born Jan. 25, 1939, immigrated to Canada in May 1956.
STEGENHUIS, Herman Jan, born May 1, 1931, immigrated to Canada on June 16, 1959.
SIJBOM, Alida Geertruida, born Aug. 26, 1927, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 22, 1958.
TOLSMA-DAMAN, Aleida, born June 30, 1926.
VAN TUNEN, Hendricus, born July 26, 1927, immigrated to Canada on Oct. 14, 1977.
VERHOEVE, Nicolaas Johannes, born Aug. 15, 1926, immigrated to Canada on June 3, 1957.
VERSCHUUREN, Anna Adriana Hubertina Maria, born Sept. 3, 1927, immigrated to Canada on April 14, 1958, possible destination: Montreal.
VERSTEEG, born Oct. 29, 1928.
VISSER, Antoon, born May 21, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 8, 1957.
VAN VIJFEIJKEN, Cornelis Johannes, born Sept. 9, 1926, immigrated to Canada on June 13, 1956.
DE WATER, Pieter, born Oct. 7, 1925, immigrated to Canada on March 21, 1939.
WILLEMS, Wilhelmus Nicolaas, born Dec. 6, 1926, immigrated to Canada on Jan. 15, 1960.

Consulate-General of the Netherlands
1 Dundas St. West, Suite #2106, Box 2
Toronto, ON M5G 1Z3
Phone: (416) 598-2520

Single Men and Women
if you are over 21 years of age and would like to find a partner in Christian marriage, write to: Christian Marriage Contact Service, P.O. Box 1127, Station B, Burlington, ON L7P 3S9. Please enclose $3.00 for a complete information package explaining our services.
Established in 1967.

For Rent

For rent in Willowdale, Toronto (Finch and Yonge St. location), basement apartment. Suits one person, light cooking, close to subway; $375 per month. Phone: (416) 221-9263.

House for rent in St. Catharines, Ont. Main floor, modern three-bedroom home. Good north-end location. $700 per month. Available immediately. Please call: (416) 935-7917.

Main floor of home in London, Ont., Owners are young Christian couple who will occupy the basement. Ideal for small family. Available Jan. 1, 1991. Please call: 1-519-451-7306.

For rent: Three-bedroom home in Grimsby, Ont. Available Jan. 1, 1991. Call (416) 945-9454 any time.

Employment wanted

Position wanted on a dairy farm as **herdsman.** Family man, non-smoker, non-drinker; 13 years full-time, two years part-time experience includes calf raising, heifer and cow management, A.I., fieldwork with a certificate in Grower Pesticide Safety. Available for work April 1, 1991. Willing to relocate to Central, South or Western Ontario near Christian school. Please write or call Al Boonstra, R.R.#5, Simcoe, ON N3Y 4K4. Phone: (519) 428-1634.

Classifieds continued.

Classified

Help Wanted

Small **building construction firm** in Eastern Ontario, complete with equipment, specializing in custom homes and renovations.
Owner wishes to retire but is willing to give assistance and keep share in the company, if so desired. This is an ideal opportunity for a hardworking all-round carpenter to be independent and have his own business, or who likes to manage this business for us on a profit-sharing basis. Do not hesitate to inquire. Write to: File #2554, c/o Calvinist Contact, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Social service work: Mutual Support Systems, a network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, invites applications for the position of **Child Care Worker.** The responsibilities of this live-in position include involvement in the educational programming of the residents, scheduling daily routines, as well as planning special events, all in a family setting. In-service training provides an excellent opportunity for personal growth and skill development at role modelling positive relationships and facilitating the resident's successes. Position includes salary and benefits package. Please submit resume to Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, R.R.1, Perry Rd., Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0. Telephone: (416) 899-2311.

Real Estate

Bi-level semi-dwelling
St. Catharines, Ont.
$128,900
An affordable new home for you! Brick and vinyl bi-level, series 800 doors, large eat-in kitchen, oak cabinets and railings, side entrance into lower level, fully landscaped, and many more features. Don't pass this by! To inspect and purchase, call G.W. Abrahams Realty Ltd., broker - Linda Lammers, Sales Representative (416) 688-0037 or (416) 688-2422, pager 130.

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Het vertrouwde adres.

Teacher

BARRIE, Ont.: Timothy Christian School, 49 Ferris Lane, Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1 needs a **Grade 3** teacher, starting April 1, 1991. Please send resume and application, c/o Mr. H.K. Bergsma, Principal. Tel.: (705) 726-6621.

PARKSVILLE, B.C.:
January appointment
Parksville Christian School on Vancouver Island needs a full-time teacher for **Grades 5/6** as of Jan. 1, 1991. We are looking for strength in French with Science/Math teaching abilities. Please send resume as soon as possible to: Parksville Christian School, 55C Pym St., Parksville, BC V9P 1B6. Tel.: (604) 248-8355.

Teacher

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High requires two teachers!
1) **Math-Sc./Sc.-Math specialist,**
2) a **generalist** with combinations of some of the following: Sc., Math, Soc. St., Fr., Ped., Religious St., Bus., Comp.
Consider the challenge and the opportunity of growing with, and placing your stamp on a new school with new facilities. We wish to interview both experienced and new teachers who would like to teach students in an all embracing Christian curriculum, in beautiful central Alberta.
Send applications to: Central Alberta Christian High School, Box 958, Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0, c/o Jack Vanden Pol (Prin.)

TRENTON, Ont.: Trenton Christian School. Effective March 18 to June 21, 1991, there will be a full-time **Grade 5/6** maternity leave position open with a possibility of full-time employment for the upcoming fall. Please address all enquiries to: c/o Mr. Arie Van Duyvendyk, Principal, Trenton Christian School, 20 Fourth Ave., Trenton, ON K8V 5N3

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Christian School, a denominationally diverse community, currently offering Kindergarten through Grade 7, is planning to expand to junior high school beginning with Grade 8 in the 1991/92 school year. Persons with a strong **Math/Science** background in education with interest in teaching **P.E., Art or Computer,** are invited to apply. Please direct enquiries to: Ellen Visser, Junior High Program Co-ordinator, Vancouver Christian School, 3496 Mons Dr., Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6

Accommodations

Room and board available in very nice home in London, Ont. Close to Fanshawe College. Call: (519) 451-6787.

We are looking for a Christian female to share a house in Vineland, Ont. Available Jan. 1, 1991, for $250 per month. Please call (416) 892-1242.

Anniversaries

1940 30 December 1990
COR KROMHOUT
en
NEL KROMHOUT-BLIJLEVEN
Met grote dankbaarheid gedenken wij de dag dat zij 50 jaar getrouwd zijn.
Hun kinderen, kleinkinderen en achter-kleinkinderen.
Correspondentie adres: Eiberoord 10, 2317XL Leiden, Nederland.

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Real Estate

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On prime properties in Toronto/Willowdale
Safe investment, personal guarantees, 14% interest, payable monthly. Amounts of **$20,000** and up.
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ask for Mr. Snoek; Tel.: (416) 221-7400
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Help Wanted

Help Wanted

The Ontario Alliance of Christian School Societies
invites applications for the position of
PUBLIC RELATIONS CO-ORDINATOR
This full-time position is open to a person with strong communication and interpersonal skills. Experience in Christian schools and knowledge of all aspects of public relations are very desirable. The successful applicant will have familiarity with the community that supports Christian day schools and an enthusiasm for the vision of Christian education in the context of Alliance goals.
For further information write:
Dr. A. Guldemond, Executive Director
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
P.O. Box 7220, Ancaster, ON L9G 3L4
DEADLINE: Jan. 15, 1991

Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church
Bowmanville, Ontario,
invites applications for a part-time
MUSIC DIRECTOR
We are seeking an energetic person willing to direct and co-ordinate our music program. This person must be an organist. The application deadline is April 30, 1991.
A job description is available on request.
Send resumes and requests to:
Ms. Barb Siebenga
R.R.#6, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K7
(416) 623-3487

Teacher

Teacher

Abbotsford Christian School
Elementary Principal
The Abbotsford Christian School Board seeks to appoint its second elementary campus principal for the 1991-92 school year (K-7; 325 students). The successful candidate must be willing to join a dynamic, rapidly expanding, interdenominational Christian School system, whose team of administrators give leadership to over 900 students in three separate campuses (see other ad).
Applicants who are certifiable in B.C. should send application, resume and references to:
Henry Contant, Principal
Abbotsford Christian School, Elementary Campus
Box 175, Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N8
(604) 859-5167 or Fax: (604) 859-9995

More teacher ads on page 19 ...

The Ministry to Seafarers
of the Christian Reformed Church
201 Commune Street West, Montreal, PQ H2Y 2C9
is seeking a committed
HOST COUPLE
for our **Seafarers Centre,** a foreign mission field within North America, now in its sixth year of operation as a "home away from home" to seafarers of some 80 different countries.
No meal service, no overnight accommodations.
Responsibilities include:
— making seafarers feel at home
— housekeeping duties
— driving seafarers to and from the ships
— facilitating overseas phone calls
— staffing the souvenir shop
This is a full-time salaried position.
Contact: Chaplain Barend Biesheuvel
at the Seafarers Centre
(514) 844-1476 or at home (514) 624-0736
or: Rev. John Visser, Chairman of our Board
at (613) 962-7510

Trinity Christian School
Burlington, Ont.,
is looking for a
TEACHING PRINCIPAL
for August 1991.
We are an interdenominational K-8 school with 154 students.
Applications will be accepted until *Jan. 18, 1991.* Please send a complete resume and references to:
SEARCH COMMITTEE
c/o Trinity Christian School
650 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E7
Tel. (416) 634-3052 or J. Vanderhoek (416) 336-8032

Classified/Events

Calendar of Events

Dec. 22	Christmas concert by the "Christian Choir New Life" and the male chorus "Collegium Musicum" at 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **St. Catharines,** Ont.	**Dec. 28**	"Sing Alleluiah" with "The Ambassadors" at 8 p.m., First CRC **Hamilton,** Ont., with Paul Grimwood (harpsichord) and Carolyn Stronks (flute). Admission: $5.00.
Dec. 22	Annual Christmas concert by St. Thomas Ladies' Choir "Gloria in Excelsis" and the St. Thomas & District Male Chorus "Crescendo." At 7:30 p.m., First United Church, St. George St., **St. Thomas,** Ont.	**Dec. 29**	"Sing Alleluiah" with "The Ambassadors" at 8 p.m., Park Baptist Church (George and Darling), **Brantford,** Ont., with John Vandertuin (organist) and Carolyn Stronks (flute). Admission: $5.00.
Dec. 22	Christmas concert by the OCMA, Leendert Kooij director, with Andre Knevel at the organ. At 8 p.m., Willowdale United Church, **Willowdale,** Ont. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.	**Dec. 30**	City-wide hymn sing, 8 p.m., First CRC, **Sarnia,** Ont.
Dec. 23	Candlelight service with the Adoramus-Maranatha Choir, 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **York,** Ont.	**Jan. 8**	RCBPO (Hamilton Chapter) breakfast meeting, 7:30 a.m., Surf Restaurant, Brant St., **Burlington,** Ont. Call (416) 524-1203.

Abbotsford Christian Schools

Join a dynamic, rapidly expanding, interdenominational Christian School System of over 900 students K-12 that will be operating from three separate campuses for the 1991-92 school year.

Abbotsford Christian School invites applications from teachers and principals certifiable in B.C. for the following *new* positions for September 1991.

ELEMENTARY CAMPUSES (K-7) Each campus approx. 325 students:
Elementary Principalship
Primary — K, 1, 2
Intermediate — 7
Librarian — (full time)
French — Grades 4-7 (part time)
Secretary — (full time)

Possible Openings:
Vice Principalship — Grades 3/4, 5/6

SECONDARY CAMPUS (8 - 12) Approximately 275 students.
Possible openings in combination of:
French
Science
Learning Assistance
Junior High English and Math

Send applications, resume and references to:

Henry Contant, Principal
Abbotsford Christian School
Elementary Campus
Box 175
Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N8
(604) 859-5167
Fax: 859-9995

or

Dwight Moodie, Principal
Abbotsford Christian School
Secondary Campus
Box 157
Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N8
(604) 859-5528
Fax: 859-2240

TEACHER / ADMINISTRATOR
(assistant principal)

The Edmonton Society for Christian Education is seeking an Assistant Principal for their **high school,** one of a four school, K-to-12 system. With a student body of 175, a staff of 15, and stepping into its 25th year, the **high school** offers full general and academic programs which emphasizes Christian perspective and action.

a. *Responsibilities:* The Assistant Principal's responsibilities (2/5 time) are characterized by shared leadership, which currently gives special but not exclusive emphasis to curriculum and instructional supervision and teacher evaluation. The position's teaching assignment (3/5 time) will be based on training and previous teaching success in secondary science and/or social studies.

b. *Training:* undergraduate, graduate, or specialist training in one of, or in a combination of curriculum and/or administration: *and* teaching experience and eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate.

c. *Letters of Reference* from each of the following: current supervisor, a teaching colleague, an administrative colleague.

Apply to:
J. Greidanus, Convenor
Assistant Principal Search Committee
16 Valleyview Point, Edmonton, AB T5R 5T4

Deadline: applications received by January 30, 1991.

For job description and other details:
1-403-454-0791 (school)

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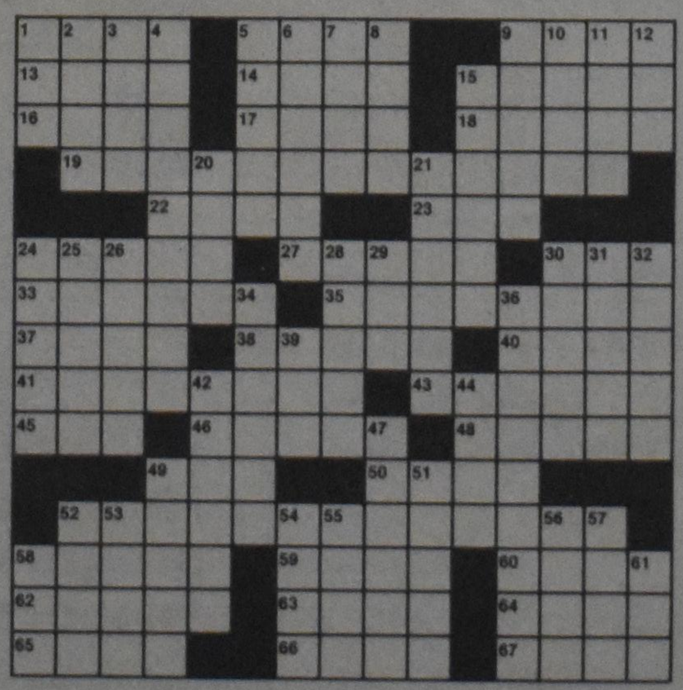
Annual Reunion
DUTCH MARINE VETERANS
When: Saturday, Jan. 19, 1991
(hall open at 5 p.m., dinner — $25 p.p. — at 7 p.m.)
Where: St. John's Hall, 2185 Stavebank Rd., Mississauga, Ont.
Music: Charlie Koopmans and his group
Info: Bas De Man (416) 277-0501
Piet Duyn (416) 493-6958
Harry Roffel (416) 646-4681

40th Anniversary
The First Christian Reformed Church
of Kingston, Ont., will, D.V. celebrate its 40th anniversary on
Saturday, January 19, 1991, at 7:30 p.m.
in the Kingston Christian School
1212 Woodbine Rd., Kingston
and on
Sunday, January 20, 1991,
with a special church service at 10:00 a.m.
For more information and eventual lodging contact:
Mr. Rein VandeWal
R.R.#1, Sydenham, ON K0H 2T0
Tel.: (613) 376-3506

Weekly Puzzle

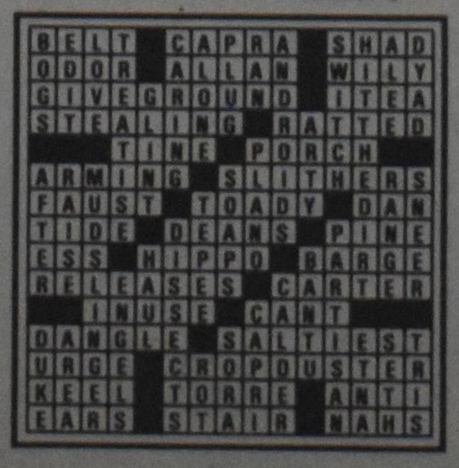
by Donald Groat



ACROSS
1 Servicewoman WWII
5 Falls behind
9 — and polish
13 Korbut
14 Reykjavik's land: abbr.
15 Eng. potter
16 Cafe —
17 Freeman of films
18 Lubricated
19 "It is easy — ..." (begin Aesop quote)
22 Atop
23 Shoshonean
24 Spectacle
27 Put on
30 Arrest
33 Made an incision
35 Toothless
37 Voiced
38 Talked endlessly
40 Thames school
41 Bosom buddy
43 Job for a page
45 Comic Louis
46 Fragrances
48 Man and Pines
49 Diary
50 Punta del —
52 Conclude quote
58 Gabble
59 Pro —
60 Ancient Olympic site
62 Irritation
63 Dyer's device
64 Teasdale
65 Entrance
66 Particle
67 Gush forth

DOWN
1 "How the West Was —"
2 Thanks —!
3 Exchange fee
4 Infection of a kind
5 Oblivion
6 Oak nuts
7 Ms Rowlands
8 Croatian
9 Steeple
10 Venetian traveler
11 The same
12 Actor Danson
15 Relent
20 Fleuret
21 Playwright O'Neill
24 US painter
25 Simon of song
26 Related maternally
28 Purport
29 Excitement
30 Of birth
31 Reconciled
32 Gives
34 Channel deepener
36 Pithy quality
39 In the past
42 Shingle man
44 Moreno
47 Sonnet part
49 Not now
51 Look fixedly
52 Florence's river
53 Starch plant
54 1/16 ounce
55 Othello's friend
56 Thunder noise
57 Gaelic country
58 Tablet
61 Noticed

Last Week's Puzzle



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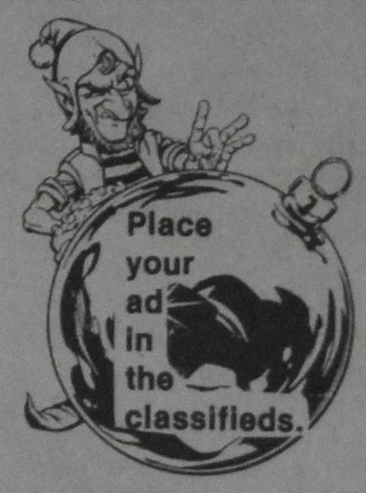
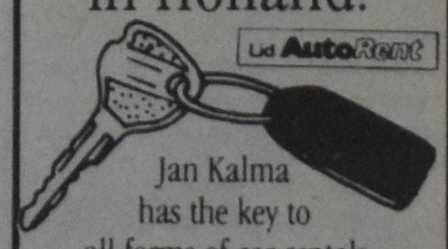


Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Change in worship time
Clarkson CRC, Mississauga, Ont., will begin holdings its evening church services at 6 p.m., effective Jan. 6, 1991.

Want to rent a car while in Holland?



Jan Kalma has the key to all forms of car rentals.

Will deliver car to Amsterdam airport if desired.

jan kalma
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Fax (31) 5120-32324

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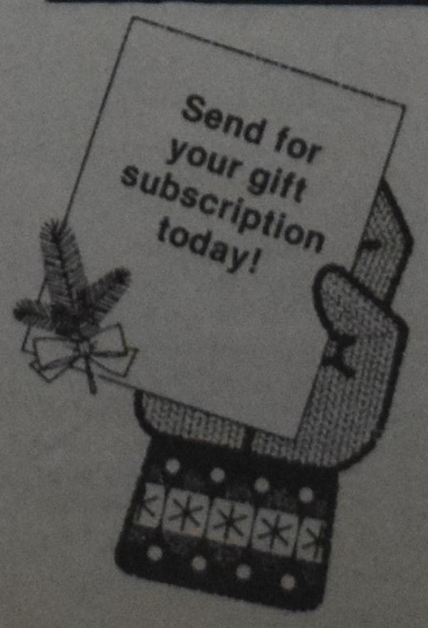
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4



Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Christian responsibility

Struggling to go straight

Square John, by Marlene Webber and Tony McGilvary. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. ISBN 0-8020-5776-4. Softcover, 193 pp., $14.95. Reviewed by Debbie Davis, Hamilton, Ont.

Is it possible for a person to permanently discard a 35-year career of compulsive crime? *Square John* is a true account of how Tony McGilvary transformed his own life and also enabled other ex-cons to obtain jobs and remain straight.

As an infant Tony was sent to live with an uncle and aunt after his mother suffered a severe nervous breakdown. Tony's uncle blamed the young boy for his mother's misfortune. To alleviate his feelings of rejection, Tony sought revenge by stealing. He soon graduated from petty theft from his uncle's pockets to big-time crime. By the age of 22 he had earned the reputation of being an incorrigible crook.

But after many years Tony turned his life around. For this he credits a tightly-knit gypsy family in the States with whom he lived for three years. During that time he felt less and less like a fugitive and a crook, so he turned himself in at the parole office in Kingston, Ont., in order to complete his prison time there. He was helped there by Sister Marguerite, a prison nun at Joyceville.

Since Tony had no difficulty finding and holding a job, he was approached by other ex-offenders for help in finding a job. Soon Tony was contacting a number of employers, asking them to give jobs to ex-cons. From this humble beginning the HELP Program was born. In 1986 it ran five offices and had found permanent jobs for more than 2,000 former prisoners. Less than 20 per cent have returned to prison for having committed crimes, in sharp contrast to the standard recidivism rate of between 50 to 70 per cent.

Unwitting accomplices

Reflecting on his life of crime, Tony says that ordinary people often consciously encourage criminals. "I never had a problem finding a straight citizen looking for a crooked bargain." He tells us: "Remember, cons couldn't live without 'square johns' and right-thinking citizens." He also says that he learned a lot about breaking-and-entering in prison and while there built up revenge in his heart that drove him to use his new knowledge.

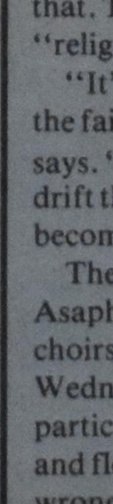
Our society creates motivation for crime through over-emphasis on financial success by any means. Unskilled workers feel stuck on a treadmill. At one point Tony says he knew he had to do more than "eating dust and drinking beer." A night of crime brought richer rewards than slugging it out all day with low pay.

So now with the HELP Program Tony helps people leave a life of crime for jobs that are satisfying, even though they themselves and the system have given up on them. This book presents one way of implementing our mandate to provide a place in which vulnerable members of our society may experience Christ's love.

Square John compels us to face the fact that church members may move people towards crime by labelling them. Labels can lock people into roles from which it is hard to escape deviant behaviour. After a while it is not only the act but also the person who is considered evil. Tony found that even when he was good he was not believed because people had pegged him as incapable of good. This should prompt us to consider our own attitudes and remember that God calls us to be thoughtful, sensitive and encouraging of others.

This book is an excellent human story which gives us a glimpse into a convict's personal life. It is a deeply-moving work that forces us to discard our pre-conceived notions that prisoners are inherently deficient people. It also provides a thought-provoking critique of our penal system, which more often serves to perpetuate crime rather than to inhibit it.

One minor shortcoming of the book, it seems to me, is that it pictures Tony's success as atypical. I believe that without structural obstacles most human beings would by the grace of God co-operate with each other. By our disproportionate emphasis on heroes we also create habitual losers.



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Drifters

"My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:26).

I was sitting at a cafeteria table at a large university last summer. Crowds of hungry people swept by, none that I knew or ought to have known in the circumstances that put me there.

But then a face. Haven't I seen that face before?

And then the voice and the greeting. Sure, I knew her: Lynn. Exactly one decade ago she was a young member of a SWIM (Summer Workshop In Ministries) team I had led.

We chatted excitedly. It's hard to catch up on 10 lost years in 10 minutes. What are you doing here? Are you married? Children? Career? Ever see any of the "old" team members?

Lynn's eyes were bright, but her spirit was much more guarded than it had been a decade before. Then, she had recently made public profession of her faith and life before her was an open door of Christian service. She had goals (Calvin College) and plans ("work with disadvantaged children, maybe") and enthusiasm ("Who knows where God might lead me!").

How had it all gone?

Well, some other things entered the picture. Somehow it didn't all work out. A whirlwind relationship with a guy others cautioned her against. A pregnancy. A forced marriage. Verbal and physical abuse. Substance dependence. Certainly no participation in the church. Divorce. Shame, Pain.

How did it happen, Lynn? To you, of all people?

It just happened

That's just it ...; I don't really know. I wanted to experience life like others did. One thing led to the next. There was never any real turning point or decision to drop my faith. It just happened ....

Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge writes about that. The vast majority of Canadians embrace what he calls a "religionless Christianity."

"It's not a matter that they've done a serious examination of the faith and decided it doesn't make intellectual sense," he says. "The biggest problem is just one of apathy." People drift through the circumstances of life, and along the way become "simply somewhat indifferent."

There's Lynn. There's a host of people we know. And there's Asaph in Psalm 73. Talk about slowly slipping: he directs the choirs at temple worship in Jerusalem. He goes to practices on Wednesday night. He composes a new song each month. He participates in the staff meetings at the temple. But his heart and flesh fail in it all. He's even thinking that he's doing the wrong thing by maintaining this facade of faith for his family (vs. 15).

Somehow other things have stolen his heart and his religion. Maybe it's the sense of frustration that his religion doesn't make a difference in life. Maybe it's a lack of spiritual integrity on the part of those around him. Maybe it's just the silence of God. But the drift of life catches him into another current: doubt, apathy, indifference, "Religionless churchianity."

Snagged by grace

Enter grace. Asaph goes back to church. Lynn sits here telling me she asked her church council if she could stand and apologize to the congregation where she once stood to make public profession of faith. Drifters find a new current and hearts regain strength.

Why? Indeed, why?

Perhaps because life in the other currents isn't as satisfying as the travel brochures promise. Perhaps because rude circumstances wake us up to deeper needs. But perhaps, most of all, because God never lets us go.

When you're drifting along in the water of life, a snag can be an annoying thing. But if the water is pulling you toward the brink of Niagara Falls, the snag may be the most refreshing sense of grace you could ever imagine!

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.

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